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THE AUTHOR'S POCKET-VOLUME EDITION

LONGFELLOW'S
POETICAL WORKS

VOLUME I

VOICES OF THE NIGHT AND EARLIER POEMS, &c

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL
1878

CONTENTS.

VOICES OF THE NIGHT (1839):—

	PAGE
Prelude	9
Hymn to the Night	14
A Psalm of Life	15
The Reaper and the Flowers	17
The Light of Stars	19
Footsteps of Angels	21
Flowers	23
The Beleaguered City	26
Midnight Mass for the Dying Year	28
L'Envoi	31

EARLIER POEMS:—

An April Day	33
Autumn	35
Woods in Winter	37
Hymn of the Moravian Nuns of Bethlehem	38
Sunrise on the Hills	40
The Spirit of Poetry	42
Burial of the Minnisink	45

BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS (1812):—

	PAGE
The Skeleton in Armour	48
The Wreck of the Hesperus	56
The Luck of Edenhall	61
The Elected Knight	64

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS (1841—1846—1858):—

The Village Blacksmith	67
Endymion	69
The Two Locks of Hair	71
It is not always May	73
The Rainy Day	74
God's-Acre	75
To the River Charles	76
Blind Bartimeus	78
The Goblet of Life	80
Maidenhood	83
Excelsior	85

POEMS ON SLAVERY (1843):—

To William E. Channing	88
The Slave's Dream	89
The Good Part that shall not be taken away ..	92
The Slave in the Dismal Swamp	94
The Slave Singing at Midnight	95
The Witnesses	97
The Quadroon Girl	98
The Warning	101

PAGE

THE BELFRY OF BRUGES AND OTHER

POEMS (1845):—

Carillon 102

The Belfry of Bruges 105

MISCELLANEOUS:—

A Gleam of Sunshine 110

The Arsenal at Springfield 113

Nuremberg 116

The Norman Baron 122

Rain in Summer 126

To a Child 130

The Occultation of Orion 138

The Bridge 141

To the Driving Cloud 144

Curfew 147

THE SEASIDE AND THE FIRESIDE (1849):—

Dedication 150

BY THE SEASIDE.

The Building of the Ship 153

The Evening Star 170

The Secret of the Sea 171

Twilight 173

Sir Humphrey Gilbert 174

The Lighthouse 177

The Fire of Driftwood 180

BY THE FIRESIDE.

Resignation 183

	PAGE
The Builders	186
Sand of the Desert in an Hour-Glass	188
The Open Window	190
King Witlaf's Drinking-Horn	192
Gaspar Becerra	194
Pegasus in Pound	195
Tegnér's Drapa	198
The Singers	201
Suspiria	203
Hymn	203

TRANSLATIONS:—

The Blind Girl of Castèl-Cuillè	205
A Christmas Carol	222

LONGFELLOW'S POEMS.

VOICES OF THE NIGHT.

1839.

Πόντια, πόντια νύξ,
ἵπνοδότειρα τῶν πολυπύων βροτῶν,
ἔρεβόθεν ἔθι' μόλε μόλε κατάπτερος
'Αγαμεμνόνιον ἐπὶ δῶμον'
ὑπο γὰρ ἀλγέων, ὑπὸ τε συμφορᾷς
διοιχόμεθ', οἰχόμεθα.

EURIPIDES.

PRELUDE.

PLEASANT it was, when woods were green,
And winds were soft and low,
To lie amid some sylvan scene,
Where, the long drooping boughs between,
Shadows dark and sunlight sheen
Alternate come and go ;
Or where the denser grove receives
No sunlight from above,
But the dark foliage interweaves
In one unbroken roof of leaves,
Underneath whose sloping eaves
The shadows hardly move.

Beneath some patriarchal tree
I lay upon the ground ;
His hoary arms uplifted he,
And all the broad leaves over me
Clapped their little hands in glee,
With one continuous sound ;—

A slumberous sound, a sound that brings
The feelings of a dream,
As of innumerable wings,
As, when a bell no longer swings,
Faint the hollow murmur rings
O'er meadow, lake, and stream.

And dreams of that which cannot die,
Bright visions, came to me,
As lapped in thought I used to lie,
And gaze into the summer sky,
Where the sailing clouds went by,
Like ships upon the sea ;

Dreams that the soul of youth engage
Ere Fancy has been quelled ;
Old legends of the monkish page,
Traditions of the saint and sage,
Tales that have the rime of age,
And chronicles of Eld.

And, loving still these quaint old themes,
Even in the city's throng
I feel the freshness of the streams,
That, crossed by shades and sunny gleams,
Water the green land of dreams,
The holy land of song.

Therefore, at Pentecost, which brings
The spring, clothed like a bride,
When nestling buds unfold their wings,
And bishop's-caps have golden rings,
Musing upon many things,
I sought the woodlands wide.

The green trees whispered low and mild ;
It was a sound of joy !
They were my playmates when a child,
And rocked me in their arms so wild !
Still they looked at me and smiled,
As if I were a boy ;

And ever whispered, mild and low,
“ Come, be a child once more ! ”
And waved their long arms to and fro,
And beckoned solemnly and slow ;
Oh, I could not choose but go
Into the woodlands hoar,—

Into the blithe and breathing air,
 Into the solemn wood,
Solemn and silent everywhere !
Nature with folded hands seemed there,
Kneeling at her evening prayer !
 Like one in prayer I stood.

Before me rose an avenue
 Of tall and sombrous pines ;
Abroad their fan-like branches grew,
And, where the sunshine darted through,
Spread a vapour soft and blue,
 In long and sloping lines.

And, falling on my weary brain,
 Like a fast-falling shower,
The dreams of youth came back again,
Low lisplings of the summer rain,
Dropping on the ripened grain,
 As once upon the flower.

Visions of childhood ! Stay, oh stay !
 Ye were so sweet and wild !
And distant voices seemed to say,
“ It cannot be ! They pass away !
Other themes demand thy lay ;
 Thou art no more a child !

“The land of Song within thee lies,
Watered by living springs ;
The lids of Fancy’s sleepless eyes
Are gates unto that Paradise,
Holy thoughts, like stars, arise,
Its clouds are angels’ wings.

“Learn, that henceforth thy song shall be,
Not mountains capped with snow,
Nor forests sounding like the sea,
Nor rivers flowing ceaselessly,
Where the woodlands bend to see
The bending heavens below.

“There is a forest where the din
Of iron branches sounds !
A mighty river roars between,
And whosoever looks therein
Sees the heavens all black with sin,
Sees not its depths, nor bounds.

“Athwart the swinging branches cast,
Soft rays of sunshine pour ;
Then comes the fearful wintry blast ;
Our hopes, like withered leaves, fall fast ;
Pallid lips say, ‘It is past !
We can return no more !’

“Look, then, into thine heart, and write !

Yes, into Life’s deep stream !

All forms of sorrow and delight,

All solemn Voices of the Night,

That can soothe thee, or affright,—

Be these henceforth thy theme.”

HYMN TO THE NIGHT.

Ἀσπασίη, τριλλιστος.

I HEARD the trailing garments of the Night
 Sweep through her marble halls !
 I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
 From the celestial walls !

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,
 Stoop o’er me from above ;
 The calm, majestic presence of the Night,
 As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,
 The manifold, soft chimes,
 That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,
 Like some old poet’s rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air
My spirit drank repose ;
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—
From those deep cisterns flows.

O holy Night ! from thee I learn to bear
What man has borne before !
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,
And they complain no more.

Peace ! Peace ! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer !
Descend with broad-winged flight,
The welcome, the thrice-prayed-for, the most fair,
The best-beloved Night !

A PSALM OF LIFE.

WHAT THE HEART OF THE YOUNG MAN SAID
TO THE PSALMIST.

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,
“Life is but an empty dream !”
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real ! Life is earnest !
And the grave is not its goal ;
“Dust thou art, to dust returnest,”
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way ;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle !
Be a hero in the strife !

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant !
Let the dead Past bury its dead !
Act,—act in the living Present !
Heart within, and God o'erhead

Lives of great men all remind us
 We can make our lives sublime,
 And, departing, leave behind us
 Footprints on the sands of time ;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
 Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
 A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
 Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
 With a heart for any fate ;
 Still achieving, still pursuing,
 Learn to labour and to wait.

THE REAPER AND THE FLOWERS.

THERE is a Reaper, whose name is Death,
 And with his sickle keen,
 He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
 And the flowers that grow between.

“ Shall I have nought that is fair ? ” saith he ;
 “ Have nought but the bearded grain ?
 Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
 I will give them all back again.”

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves ;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

“My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,”
The Reaper said, and smiled ;
“Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where he was once a child.

“They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear.”

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love ;
She knew she should find them all again
In the fields of light above.

O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day ;
’Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

THE LIGHT OF STARS.

THE night is come, but not too soon ;
 And sinking silently,
 All silently, the little moon
 Drops down behind the sky.

There is no light in earth or heaven,
 But the cold light of stars ;
 And the first watch of night is given
 To the red planet Mars.

Is it the tender star of love ?
 The star of love and dreams ?
 O no ! from that blue tent above,
 A hero's armour gleams.

And earnest thoughts within me rise,
 When I behold afar,
 Suspended in the evening skies,
 The shield of that red star.

O star of strength ! I see thee stand
 And smile upon my pain ;
 Thou beckonest with thy mailed hand,
 And I am strong again.


Within my breast there is no light,
But the cold light of stars ;
I give the first watch of the night
To the red planet Mars.

The star of the unconquered will,
He rises in my breast,
Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm, and self-possessed.

And thou, too, whosoe'er thou art,
That readest this brief psalm,
As one by one thy hopes depart,
Be resolute and calm.

O fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.

FOOTSTEPS OF ANGELS.


 WHEN the hours of Day are numbered,
 And the voices of the Night
 Wake the better soul, that slumbered,
 To a holy, calm delight ;

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,
 And, like phantoms grim and tall,
 Shadows from the fitful fire-light
 Dance upon the parlour wall ;

Then the forms of the departed
 Enter at the open door ;
 The beloved, the true-hearted,
 Come to visit me once more ;

He, the young and strong, who cherished
 Noble longings for the strife,
 By the road-side fell and perished,
 Weary with the march of life !

They, the holy ones and weakly,
 Who the cross of suffering bore,
 Folded their pale hands so meekly,
 Spake with us on earth no more !

And with them the Being Beauteous,
Who unto my youth was given,
More than all things else to love me,
And is now a saint in heaven.

With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

And she sits and gazes at me
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies.

Uttered not, yet comprehended,
Is the spirit's voiceless prayer,
Soft rebukes, in blessings ended,
Breathing from her lips of air.

O, though oft depressed and lonely,
All my fears are laid aside,
If I but remember only
Such as these have lived and died !

FLOWERS.

SPAKE full well, in language quaint and
olden,

One who dwelleth by the castled Rhine,
When he called the flowers, so blue and golden,
Stars, that in earth's firmament do shine.

Stars they are, wherein we read our history,
As astrologers and seers of eld ;
Yet not wrapped about with awful mystery,
Like the burning stars, which they beheld.

Wondrous truths, and manifold as wondrous,
God hath written in those stars above ;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us
Stands the revelation of his love.

Bright and glorious is that revelation,
Written all over this great world of ours ;
Making evident our own creation,
In these stars of earth,—these golden flowers.

And the Poet, faithful and far-seeing,
Sees, alike in stars and flowers, a part
Of the self-same, universal being,
Which is throbbing in his brain and heart.

Gorgeous flowerets in the sunlight shining,
Blossoms flaunting in the eye of day,
Tremulous leaves, with soft and silver lining,
Buds that open only to decay ;

Brilliant hopes, all woven in gorgeous tissues,
Flaunting gaily in the golden light ;
Large desires, with most uncertain issues,
Tender wishes, blossoming at night !

These in flowers and men are more than seeming ;
Workings are they of the self-same powers,
Which the Poet, in no idle dreaming,
Seeth in himself and in the flowers.

Everywhere about us are they glowing,
Some like stars, to tell us Spring is born ;
Others, their blue eyes with tears o'erflowing,
Stand like Ruth amid the golden corn ;

Not alone in Spring's armorial bearing,
And in Summer's green emblazoned field,
But in arms of brave old Autumn's wearing,
In the centre of his brazen shield ;

Not alone in meadows and green alleys,
On the mountain-top, and by the brink
Of sequestered pools in woodland valleys,
Where the slaves of nature stoop to drink ;

Not alone in her vast dome of glory,
Not on graves of bird and beast alone,
But in old cathedrals, high and hoary,
On the tombs of heroes, carved in stone ;

In the cottage of the rudest peasant,
In ancestral homes, whose crumbling towers,
Speaking of the Past unto the Present,
Tell us of the ancient Games of Flowers ;

In all places, then, and in all seasons,
Flowers expand their light and soul-like wings,
Teaching us, by most persuasive reasons,
How akin they are to human things.

And with childlike, credulous affection
We behold their tender buds expand ;
Emblems of our own great resurrection,
Emblems of the bright and better land.

THE BELEAGUERED CITY.

I HAVE read, in some old marvellous tale,
Some legend strange and vague,
That a midnight host of spectres pale
Beleaguered the walls of Prague.

Beside the Moldau's rushing stream,
With the wan moon overhead,
There stood, as in an awful dream,
The army of the dead.

White as a sea-fog, landward bound.
The spectral camp was seen,
And with a sorrowful, deep sound,
The river flowed between.

No other voice nor sound was there,
No drum, nor sentry's pace ;
The mist-like banners clasped the air,
As clouds with clouds embrace.

But, when the old cathedral bell
Proclaimed the morning prayer,
The white pavilions rose and fell
On the alarmed air.

Down the broad valley, fast and far,
The troubled army fled ;
Up rose the glorious morning star,
The ghastly host was dead.

I have read, in the marvellous heart of man,
That strange and mystic scroll,
That an army of phantoms, vast and wan,
Beleaguer the human soul.

Encamped beside Life's rushing stream,
In Fancy's misty light,
Gigantic shapes and shadows gleam
Portentous through the night.

Upon its midnight battle-ground
The spectral camp is seen,
And, with a sorrowful, deep sound,
Flows the River of Life between.

No other voice, nor sound is there,
In the army of the grave ;
No other challenge breaks the air,
But the rushing of Life's wave.

And when the solemn and deep church bell
Entreats the soul to pray,
The midnight phantoms feel the spell,
The shadows sweep away.

Down the broad Vale of Tears afar
The spectral camp is fled ;
Faith shineth as a morning star,
Our ghastly fears are dead.

MIDNIGHT MASS FOR THE DYING YEAR.

YES, the Year is growing old,
And his eye is pale and bleared !
Death, with frosty hand and cold,
Plucks the old man by the beard,
Sorely,—sorely !

The leaves are falling, falling,
Solemnly and slow ;
Caw ! caw ! the rooks are calling,
It is a sound of woe,
A sound of woe !

Through woods and mountain passes
The winds, like anthems, roll ;
They are chanting solemn masses,
Singing, " Pray for this poor soul,
Pray,—Pray ! "

And the hooded clouds, like friars,
Tell their beads in drops of rain,
And patter their doleful prayers ;—
But their prayers are all in vain,
All in vain !

There he stands in the foul weather,
The foolish, fond Old Year,
Crowned with wild flowers and with heather,
Like weak, despised Lear,
A king,—a king !

Then comes the summer-like day,
Bids the old man rejoice !
His joy ! his last ! O, the old man gray
Loveth that ever-soft voice,
Gentle and low.

“To the crimson woods he saith,—
To the voice gentle and low
Of the soft air, like a daughter’s breath,—
“Pray do not mock me so !
Do not laugh at me !”

And now the sweet day is dead ;
Cold in his arms it lies ;
No stain from its breath is spread
Over the glassy skies,
No mist or stain !

Then, too, the Old Year dieth,
And the forests utter a moan,
Like the voice of one who crieth
In the wilderness alone,
“Vex not his ghost !”

Then comes, with an awful roar,
Gathering and sounding on,
The storm-wind from Labrador,
The wind Euroclydon,
The storm-wind !

Howl ! howl ! and from the forest
Sweep the red leaves away !
Would the sins that thou abhorrest,
O Soul ! could thus decay,
And be swept away !

For there shall come a mightier blast,
There shall be a darker day ;
And the stars, from heaven down-cast,
Like red leaves be swept away !
Kyrie, eleyson !
Christe, eleyson !

L'ENVOI.

YE voices, that arose
After the Evening's close,
And whispered to my restless heart repose !

Go, breathe it in the ear
Of all who doubt and fear,
And say to them, " Be of good cheer ! "

Ye sounds, so low and calm,
That in the groves of balm
Seemed to me like an angel's psalm !

Go, mingle yet once more
With the perpetual roar
Of the pine forest, dark and hoar !

Tongues of the dead, not lost,
But speaking from death's frost,
Like fiery tongues at Pentecost !

Glimmer, as funeral lamps,
Amid the chills and damps
Of the vast plain where Death encamps !



EARLIER POEMS.

*[Written for the most part during my College Life, and
all of them before the age of nineteen.]*

AN APRIL DAY.

WHEN the warm sun, that brings
Seed-time and harvest, has returned
again,

'Tis sweet to visit the still wood, where springs
The first flower of the plain.

I love the season well,
When forest glades are teeming with bright forms,
Nor dark and many-folded clouds foretell
The coming-on of storms.

From the earth's loosened mould
The sapling draws its sustenance, and thrives ;
Though stricken to the heart with Winter's cold,
The drooping tree revives.

The softly-warbled song
Comes from the pleasant woods, and coloured
wings
Glance quick in the bright sun, that moves along
The forest openings.

When the bright sunset fills
The silver woods with light, the green slope throws
Its shadows in the hollows of the hills,
And wide the upland glows.

And, when the eve is born,
In the blue lake the sky, o'er-reaching far,
Is hollowed out, and the moon dips her horn,
And twinkles many a star.

Inverted in the tide,
Stand the gray rocks, and trembling shadows
throw ;
And the fair trees look over, side by side,
And see themselves below.

Sweet April !—many a thought
Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed ;
Nor shall they fail, till, to its autumn brought,
Life's golden fruit is shed.

AUTUMN.

WITH what a glory comes and goes the
year !

The buds of spring, those beautiful
harbingers

Of sunny skies and cloudless times, enjoy
Life's newness, and earth's garniture spread out.
And when the silver habit of the clouds
Comes down upon the autumn sun, and with
A sober gladness the old year takes up
His bright inheritance of golden fruits,
A pomp and pageant fill the splendid scene.

There is a beautiful spirit breathing now
Its mellow richness on the clustered trees,
And, from a beaker full of richest dyes,
Pouring new glory on the autumn woods,
And dipping in warm light the pillared clouds.

Morn on the mountain, like a summer bird,
Lifts up her purple wing, and in the vales
The gentle wind, a sweet and passionate wooer,
Kisses the blushing leaf, and stirs up life
Within the solemn woods of ash deep-crimsoned,
And silver beech, and maple yellow-leaved,
Where Autumn, like a faint old man, sits down
By the wayside a-weary. Through the trees
The golden robin moves. The purple finch,
That on wild cherry and red cedar feeds,
A winter bird, comes with its plaintive whistle,
And pecks by the witch-hazel, whilst aloud
From cottage roofs the warbling blue-bird sings,
And merrily, with oft-repeated stroke,
Sounds from the threshing-floor the busy flail.

O what a glory doth this world put on
For him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks
On duties well performed, and days well spent !
For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves,
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teach-
ings.

He shall so hear the solemn hymn, that Death
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go
To his long resting-place without a tear.

WOODS IN WINTER.

WHEN Winter winds are piercing chill,
And through the hawthorn blows the
gale,

With solemn feet I tread the hill
That overbrows the lonely vale.

O'er the bare upland, and away
Through the long reach of desert woods,
The embracing sunbeams chastely play,
And gladden these deep solitudes.

Where, twisted round the barren oak,
The summer vine in beauty clung,
And summer winds the stillness broke,
The crystal icicle is hung.

Where, from their frozen urns, mute springs
Pour out the river's gradual tide,
Shrilly the skater's iron rings,
And voices fill the woodland side.

Alas! how changed from the fair scene,
When birds sang out their mellow lay,
And winds were soft, and woods were green,
And the song ceased not with the day.

But still wild music is abroad,
Pale, desert woods! within your crowd;
And gathering winds, in hoarse accord,
Amid the vocal reeds pipe loud.

Chill airs and wintry winds! my ear
Has grown familiar with your song;
I hear it in the opening year,—
I listen, and it cheers me long.

HYMN OF THE MORAVIAN NUNS OF BETHLEHEM.

AT THE CONSECRATION OF PULASKI'S BANNER.

WHEN the dying flame of day
Through the chancel shot its ray,
Far the glimmering tapers shed
Faint light on the cowlèd head;

And the censer burning swung,
Where, before the altar, hung
The blood-red banner, that with prayer
Had been consecrated there.

And the nun's sweet hymn was heard the while,
Sung low in the dim, mysterious aisle.

“Take thy banner ! May it wave
Proudly o'er the good and brave ;
When the battle's distant wail
Breaks the sabbath of our vale,
When the clarion's music thrills
To the hearts of these lone hills,
When the spear in conflict shakes,
And the strong lance shivering breaks.

“Take thy banner ! and, beneath
The battle-cloud's encircling wreath,
Guard it !—till our homes are free !
Guard it !—God will prosper thee !
In the dark and trying hour,
In the breaking forth of power,
In the rush of steeds and men,
His right hand will shield thee then.

“Take thy banner ! But, when night
Closes round the ghastly fight,

If the vanquished warrior bow,
Spare him !—By our holy vow,
By our prayers and many tears,
By the mercy that endears,
Spare him !—he our love hath shared !
Spare him !—as thou wouldst be spared !

“Take thy banner !—and if e’er
Thou shouldst press the soldier’s bier,
And the muffled drums should beat
To the tread of mournful feet,
Then this crimson flag shall be
Martial cloak and shroud for thee.”

The warrior took that banner proud,
And it was his martial cloak and shroud !

SUNRISE ON THE HILLS.

I STOOD upon the hills, when heaven’s wide
arch
Was glorious with the sun’s returning march,
And woods were brightened, and soft gales
Went forth to kiss the sun-clad vales.

The clouds were far beneath me ;—bathed in
light,
They gathered mid-way round the wooded height,
And, in their fading glory, shone
Like hosts in battle overthrown,
As many a pinnacle, with shifting glance,
Through the gray mist thrust up its shattered
lance,
And rocking on the cliff was left
The dark pine blasted, bare, and cleft.
The veil of cloud was lifted, and below
Glowed the rich valley, and the river's flow
Was darkened by the forest's shade,
Or glistened in the white cascade ;
Where upward, in the mellow blush of day
The noisy bittern wheeled his spiral way.

I heard the distant waters dash,
I saw the current whirl and flash,—
And richly, by the blue lake's silver beach,
The woods were bending with a silent reach.
Then o'er the vale, with gentle swell,
The music of the village bell
Came sweetly to the echo-giving hills ;
And the wild horn, whose voice the woodland
fills,

Was ringing to the merry shout
That faint and far the glen sent out,
Where, answering to the sudden shot, thin smoke,
Through thick-leaved branches, from the dingle
broke.

If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows, that thou wouldst forget,
If thou wouldst read a lesson, that will keep
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills !—No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.

THE SPIRIT OF POETRY.

THERE is a quiet spirit in these woods,
That dwells where'er the gentle south wind
blows ;

Where, underneath the white-thorn, in the glade,
The wild flowers bloom, or, kissing the soft air,
The leaves above their sunny palms outspread.
With what a tender and impassioned voice
It fills the nice and delicate ear of thought,

When the fast-ushering star of morning comes
O'er-riding the gray hills with golden scarf ;
Or when the cowed and dusky-sandaled Eve,
In mourning weeds, from out the western gate,
Departs with silent pace ! That spirit moves
In the green valley, where the silver brook,
From its full laver, pours the white cascade ;
And, babbling low amid the tangled woods,
Slips down through moss-grown stones with end-
less laughter.

And frequent, on the everlasting hills,
Its feet go forth, when it doth wrap itself
In all the dark embroidery of the storm,
And shouts the stern, strong wind. And here,
amid

The silent majesty of these deep woods,
Its presence shall uplift thy thoughts from earth,
As to the sunshine and the pure bright air
Their tops the green trees lift. Hence gifted bards
Have ever loved the calm and quiet shades.
For them there was an eloquent voice in all
The sylvan pomp of woods, the golden sun,
The flowers, the leaves, the river on its way,
Blue skies, and silver clouds, and gentle wings,—
The swelling upland, where the sidelong sun
Aslant the wooded slope, at evening, goes,—

Groves, through whose broken roof the sky looks
in,

Mountain, and shattered cliff, and sunny vale,
The distant lake, fountains,—and mighty trees,
In many a lazy syllable, repeating
Their old poetic legends to the wind.


And this is the sweet spirit, that doth fill
The world ; and, in these wayward days of youth,
My busy fancy oft embodies it,
As a bright image of the light and beauty
That dwell in nature,—of the heavenly forms
We worship in our dreams, and the soft hues
That stain the wild bird's wing, and flush the
clouds

When the sun sets. Within her eye
The heaven of April, with its changing light,
And when it wears the blue of May, is hung,
And on her lip the rich, red rose. Her hair
Is like the summer tresses of the trees,
When twilight makes them brown, and on her
cheek

Blushes the richness of an autumn sky,
With ever-shifting beauty. Then her breath,
It is so like the gentle air of Spring,
As, from the morning's dewy flowers, it comes

Full of their fragrance, that it is a joy
To have it round us,—and her silver voice
Is the rich music of a summer bird,
Heard in the still night, with its passionate
cadence.

BURIAL OF THE MINNISINK.

N sunny slope and beechen swell,
The shadowed light of evening fell;
And, where the maple's leaf was brown,
With soft and silent lapse came down
The glory that the wood receives,
At sunset, in its brazen leaves.

Far upward in the mellow light
Rose the blue hills. One cloud of white,
Around a far uplifted cone,
In the warm blush of evening shone;
An image of the silver lakes,
By which the Indian's soul awakes.

But soon a funeral hymn was heard
Where the soft breath of evening stirred
The tall, gray forest ; and a band
Of stern in heart, and strong in hand,
Came winding down beside the wave,
To lay the red chief in his grave.

They sang, that by his native bowers
He stood, in the last moon of flowers,
And thirty snows had not yet shed
Their glory on the warrior's head ;
But, as the summer fruit decays,
So died he in those naked days.

A dark cloak of the roebuck's skin
Covered the warrior, and within
Its heavy folds the weapons, made
For the hard toils of war, were laid ;
The cuirass, woven of plaited reeds,
And the broad belt of shells and beads.

Before, a dark-haired virgin train
Chanted the death-dirge of the slain ;
Behind, the long procession came
Of hoary men and chiefs of fame,
With heavy hearts, and eyes of grief,
Leading the war-horse of their chief.

Stripped of his proud and martial dress,
Uncurbed, unreined, and riderless,
With darting eye, and nostril spread,
And heavy and impatient tread,
He came ; and oft that eye so proud
Asked for his rider in the crowd.

They buried the dark chief—they freed
Beside the grave his battle-steed ;
And swift an arrow cleaved its way
To his stern heart ! One piercing neigh
Arose,—and, on the dead man's plain,
The rider grasps his steed again.



BALLADS.

1842.

THE SKELETON IN ARMOUR.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following Ballad was suggested to me while riding on the seashore at Newport. A year or two previous a skeleton had been dug up at Fall River, clad in broken and corroded armour; and the idea occurred to me of connecting it with the Round Tower at Newport, generally known hitherto as the old Windmill, though now claimed by the Danes as a work of their early ancestors. Professor Rafn, in the *Mémoires de la Société Royale des Antiquaires du Nord*, for 1838-9, says,—

“There is no mistaking in this instance the style in which the more ancient stone edifices of the North were constructed, the style which belongs to the Roman or Ante-Gothic architecture, and which, especially after the time of Charlemagne, diffused itself from Italy over the whole of the West and North of Europe, where it continued to predominate until the close of the twelfth century; that style which some authors have, from one of its most striking characteristics, called the round arch style, the same which in England is denominated Saxon, and sometimes Norman architecture.

“On the ancient structure in Newport there are no ornaments remaining which might possibly have served to guide us in assigning the probable date of its erection. That no vestige whatever is found of the pointed arch, nor any approximation to it, is indicative of an earlier rather than of a later period. From such characteristics as remain,

however, we can scarcely form any other inference than one, in which I am persuaded that all who are familiar with old Northern architecture will concur, THAT THIS BUILDING WAS ERECTED AT A PERIOD DECIDEDLY NOT LATER THAN THE TWELFTH CENTURY. This remark applies, of course, to the original building only, and not to the alterations that it subsequently received; for there are several such alterations in the upper part of the building which cannot be mistaken, and which were most likely occasioned by its being adapted in modern times to various uses; for example, as the substructure of a windmill, and latterly as a hay magazine. To the same times may be referred the windows, the fireplace, and the apertures made above the columns. That this building could not have been erected for a windmill is what an architect will easily discern."

I will not enter into a discussion of the point. It is sufficiently well established for the purpose of a ballad, though doubtless many an honest citizen of Newport, who has passed his days within sight of the Round Tower, will be ready to exclaim with Sancho, "God bless me! did I not warn you to have a care of what you were doing, for that it was nothing but a windmill? and nobody could mistake it but one who had the like in his head."

"**S**PEAK ! speak ! thou fearful guest !
Who, with thy hollow breast
Still in rude armour drest,
Comest to daunt me !
Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
But with thy fleshless palms
Stretched, as if asking alms,
Why dost thou haunt me ?"

Then, from those cavernous eyes
Pale flashes seemed to rise,
As when the Northern skies
 Gleam in December ;
And, like the water's flow
Under December's snow,
Came a dull voice of woe
 From the heart's chamber.

“I was a Viking old !
My deeds, though manifold,
No Skald in song has told,
 No Saga taught thee !
Take heed, that in thy verse
Thou dost the tale rehearse,
Else dread a dead man's curse !
 For this I sought thee.

“Far in the Northern land,
By the wild Baltic's strand,
I, with my childish hand,
 Tamed the ger-falcon ;
And, with my skates fast-bound,
Skimmed the half-frozen Sound,
That the poor whimpering hound
 Trembled to walk on.

“Oft to his frozen lair
Tracked I the grisly bear,
While from my path the hare
Fled like a shadow ;
Oft through the forest dark
Followed the were-wolf’s bark,
Until the soaring lark
Sang from the meadow.

“But when I older grew,
Joining a corsair’s crew,
O’er the dark sea I flew
With the marauders.
Wild was the life we led ;
Many the souls that sped,
Many the hearts that bled,
By our stern orders.

“Many a wassail-bout
Wore the long Winter out ;
Often our midnight shout
Set the cocks crowing,
As we the Berserk’s tale
Measured in cups of ale,
Draining the oaken pail,
Filled to o’erflowing.”

“ Once as I told in glee
Tales of the stormy sea,
Soft eyes did gaze on me,
 Burning yet tender ;
And as the white stars shine
On the dark Norway pine,
On that dark heart of mine
 Fell their soft splendour.

“ I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
Yielding, yet half afraid,
And in the forest's shade
 Our vows were plighted.
Under its loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
 By the hawk frightened.

“ Bright in her father's hall
Shields gleamed upon the wall,
Loud sang the minstrels all,
 Chanting his glory ;
When of old Hildebrand
I asked his daughter's hand,
Mute did the minstrels stand
 To hear my story.

“ While the brown ale he quaffed,
Loud then the champion laughed,
And as the wind-gusts waft
 The sea-foam brightly,
So the loud laugh of scorn,
Out of those lips unshorn,
From the deep drinking-horn
 Blew the foam lightly.

“ She was a Prince’s child,
I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
 I was discarded !
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew’s flight,
Why did they leave that night
 ‘ Her nest unguarded ?

“ Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,—
Fairest of all was she
 Among the Norsemen !—
When on the white-sea strand,
Waving his armed hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
 With twenty horsemen.

“ Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
 When the wind failed us ;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,
So that our foe we saw
 Laugh as he hailed us.

“ And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
Death ! was the helmsman’s hail,—
 Death without quarter !
Mid-ships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel ;
Down her black hulk did reel
 Through the black water !

“ As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
 With his prey laden ;
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
 Bore I the maiden.

“Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o’er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
 Stretching to leeward ;
There for my lady’s bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
 Stands looking seaward.

“There lived we many years ;
Time dried the maiden’s tears ;
She had forgot her fears,
 She was a mother ;
Death closed her mild blue eyes,
Under that tower she lies ;
Ne’er shall the sun arise
 On such another !

“Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen !
Hateful to me were men,
 The sunlight hateful !
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
 O, death was grateful !

“ Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison-bars,
Up to its native stars
 My soul ascended !
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior’s soul,
Skool ! to the Northland ! skool !”¹
—Thus the tale ended.

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS.

IT was the schooner Hesperus,
That sailed the wintry sea ;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds
That ope in the month of May.

¹ In Scandinavia this is the customary salutation when drinking a health. I have slightly changed the orthography of the word, in order to preserve the correct pronunciation.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailòr,
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,
“ I pray thee put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

“ Last night, the moon had a golden ring,
And to-night no moon we see ! ”
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the North-east ;
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength ;
She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length

“ Come hither ! come hither ! my little daughtèr,
And do not tremble so ;
For I can weather the roughest gale
That ever wind did blow.”

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast ;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

“ O father ! I hear the church-bells ring,
O say what may it be ? ”
“ 'Tis a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast ! ”
And he steered for the open sea.

“ O father ! I hear the sound of guns,
O say what may it be ? ”
“ Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea ! ”

“ O father ! I see a gleaming light,
O say what may it be ? ”
But the father answered never a word,
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savèd she might be ;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Towards the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between
A sound came from the land ;
It was the sound of the trampling surf,
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
She drifted a deary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves,
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board ;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho ! ho ! the breakers roared !

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair,
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes ;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
In the midnight and the snow !
Christ save us all from a death like this
On the reef of Norman's Woe !

THE LUCK OF EDENHALL.

FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.

[The tradition upon which this ballad is founded, and the "shards of the Luck of Edenhall," still exist in England. The goblet is in the possession of Sir Christopher Musgrave, Bart., of Eden Hall, Cumberland; and is not so entirely shattered as the ballad leaves it.]



O F Edenhall the youthful Lord
 Bids sound the festal trumpet's call ;
 He rises at the banquet board,
 And cries, 'mid the drunken revellers all,
 "Now bring me the Luck of Edenhall !"

The butler hears the words with pain,
 The house's oldest seneschal,
 Takes slow from its silken cloth again
 The drinking glass of crystal tall ;
 They call it the Luck of Edenhall.

Then said the Lord : "This glass to praise,
 Fill with red wine from Portugal !"
 The graybeard with trembling hand obeys ;
 A purple light shines over all,
 It beams from the Luck of Edenhall.

Then speaks the Lord, and waves it light,
“ This glass of flashing crystal tall
Gave to my sires the Fountain Sprite ;
She wrote in it, *If this glass doth fall,*
Farewell then, O Luck of Edenhall !

“ ’Twas right a goblet the Fate should be
Of the joyous race of Edenhall !
Deep draughts drink we right willingly ;
And willingly ring, with merry call,
Kling ! klang ! to the Luck of Edenhall ! ”

First rings it deep, and full, and mild,
Like to the song of a nightingale ;
Then like the roar of a torrent wild ;
Then mutters at last like the thunder’s fall,
The glorious Luck of Edenhall.

“ For its keeper takes a race of might,
The fragile goblet of crystal tall ;
It has lasted longer than is right ;
Kling ! klang !—with a harder blow than all
Will I try the Luck of Edenhall ! ”

As the goblet ringing flies apart,
Suddenly cracks the vaulted hall ;
And through the rift the wild flames start ;
The guests in dust are scattered all,
With the breaking Luck of Edenhall !

In storms the foe, with fire and sword ;
He in the night had scaled the wall.
Slain by the sword lies the youthful Lord,
But holds in his hand the crystal tall,
The shattered Luck of Edenhall.

On the morrow the butler gropes alone,
The graybeard in the desert hall,
He seeks his Lord's burnt skeleton,
He seeks in the dismal ruin's fall
The shards of the Luck of Edenhall.

“The stone wall,” saith he, “doth fall aside,
Down must the stately columns fall ;
Glass is this earth's Luck and Pride ;
In atoms shall fall this earthly ball,
One day like the Luck of Edenhall !”

THE ELECTED KNIGHT.

FROM THE DANISH.

[The following strange and somewhat mystical ballad is from Nyerup and Rahbek's *Danske Viser* of the Middle Ages. It seems to refer to the first preaching of Christianity in the North, and to the institution of Knight-Errantry. The three maidens I suppose to be Faith, Hope, and Charity. The irregularities of the original have been carefully preserved in the translation.]

SIR OLUF he rideth over the plain,
Full seven miles broad and seven miles
wide,

But never, ah never, can meet with the man
A tilt with him dare ride.

He saw under the hill-side
A Knight full well equipped ;
His steed was black, his helm was barred ;
He was riding at full speed.

He wore upon his spurs
Twelve little golden birds ;
Anon he spurred his steed with a clang,
And there sat all the birds and sang.

He wore upon his mail
Twelve little golden wheels ;
Anon in eddies the wild wind blew,
And round and round the wheels they flew.

He wore before his breast
A lance that was poised in rest ;
And it was sharper than diamond-stone,
It made Sir Oluf's heart to groan.

He wore upon his helm
A wreath of ruddy gold ;
And that gave him the Maidens Three,
The youngest was fair to behold.

Sir Oluf questioned the Knight eftsoon
If he were come from heaven down ;
“ Art thou Christ of Heaven,” quoth he,
“ So will I yield me unto thee.”

“ I am not Christ the Great,
Thou shalt not yield thee yet ;
I am an Unknown Knight,
Three modest Maidens have me bedight.”

“ Art thou a Knight elected,
And have three Maidens thee bedight ;
So shalt thou ride a tilt this day,
For all the Maidens’ honour ! ”

The first tilt they together rode
They put their steeds to the test ;
The second tilt they together rode,
They proved their manhood best ;

The third tilt they together rode,
Neither of them would yield ;
The fourth tilt they together rode,
They both fell on the field.


Now lie the lords upon the plain,
And their blood runs unto death :
Now sit the Maidens in the high tower,
The youngest sorrows till death.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

1841 - 1846—1858.

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH.

NDER a spreading chestnut-tree
The village smithy stands ,
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands ;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan ;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow ;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door ;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys ;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise !
He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies ;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling, —rejoicing, —sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes ;
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees it close ;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
• For the lesson thou hast taught !
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought ;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought.

ENDYMION.

THE rising moon has hid the stars ;
Her level rays, like golden bars,
Lie on the landscape green,
With shadows brown between.

And silver white the river gleams,
As if Diana, in her dreams,
Had dropt her silver bow
Upon the meadows low.

On such a tranquil night as this
She woke Endymion with a kiss,
 When, sleeping in the grove,
 He dreamed not of her love.

Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought,
Love gives itself, but is not bought ;
 Nor voice, nor sound betrays
 Its deep, impassioned gaze.

It comes,—the beautiful, the free,
The crown of all humanity,—
 In silence and alone
 To seek the elected one.

It lifts the boughs, whose shadows deep
Are Life's oblivion, the soul's sleep,
 And kisses the closed eyes
 Of him who slumbering lies.

O weary hearts ! O slumbering eyes !
O drooping souls, whose destinies
 Are fraught with fear and pain,
 Ye shall be loved again !

No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some heart, though unknown,
Responds unto his own :

Responds,—as if, with unseen wings,
An angel touched its quivering strings ;
And whispers, in its song,
“ Where hast thou stayed so long ? ”

THE TWO LOCKS OF HAIR.

FROM THE GERMAN OF PFIZER.



YOUTH, light-hearted and content,
I wander through the world ;
Here Arab-like, is pitched my tent,
And straight again is furled.

Yet oft I dream, that once a wife
Close in my heart was locked,
And in the sweet repose of life
A blessèd child I rocked.

I wake ! Away that dream,—away !
Too long did it remain !
So long, that both by night and day
It ever comes again.

The end lies ever in my thought ;
To a grave so cold and deep
The mother beautiful was brought ;
Then dropt the child asleep.

Eut now the dream is wholly o'er,
I bathe mine eyes and see ;
And wander through the world once more,
A youth so light and free.

Two locks—and they are wondrous fair—
Left me that vision mild ;
The brown is from the mother's hair,
The blond is from the child.

And when I see that lock of gold,
Pale grows the evening-red ;
And when the dark lock I behold,
I wish that I were dead.

IT IS NOT ALWAYS MAY.

*No hay pájaros en los nidos de antaño.**—Spanish Proverb.*

THE sun is bright,—the air is clear,
 The darting swallows soar and sing,
 And from the stately elms I hear
 The blue-bird prophesying Spring.

So blue yon winding river flows,
 It seems an outlet from the sky,
 Where, waiting till the west wind blows,
 The freighted clouds at anchor lie.

All things are new ;—the buds, the leaves,
 That gild the elm-tree's nodding crest,
 And even the nest beneath the eaves ;—
 There are no birds in last year's nest !

All things rejoice in youth and love,
 The fulness of their first delight !
 And learn from the soft heavens above
 The melting tenderness of night.

Maiden, that read'st this simple rhyme,
Enjoy thy youth, it will not stay ;
Enjoy the fragrance of thy prime,
For O, it is not always May !

Enjoy the Spring of Love and Youth,
To some good angel leave the rest ;
For Time will teach thee soon the truth,
There are no birds in last year's nest !

THE RAINY DAY.

THE day is cold, and dark, and dreary ;
It rains, and the wind is never weary ;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary ;
It rains, and the wind is never weary ;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart ! and cease repining ;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining ;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

GOD'S-ACRE.

I LIKE that ancient Saxon phrase which calls
The burial-ground God's-Acre ! It is just ;
It consecrates each grave within its walls,
And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust.

God's-Acre ! Yes, that blessed name imparts
Comfort to those, who in the grave have sown
The seed that they had garnered in their hearts,
Their bread of life—alas ! no more their own.

Into its furrows shall we all be cast,
In the sure faith that we shall rise again
At the great harvest, when the archangel's blast
Shall winnow, like a fan, the chaff and grain.

Then shall the good stand in immortal bloom,
In the fair gardens of that second birth ;
And each bright blossom mingle its perfume
With that of flowers which never bloomed on
earth.

With thy rude ploughshare, Death, turn up the
sod,
And spread the furrow for the seed we sow ;
This is the field and Acre of our God,
This is the place where human harvests grow !

TO THE RIVER CHARLES.

RIVER ! that in silence windest
Through the meadows, bright and free,
Till at length thy rest thou findest
In the bosom of the sea !

Four long years of mingled feeling,
Half in rest, and half in strife,
I have seen thy waters stealing
Onward, like the stream of life.

Thou hast taught me, Silent River !

Many a lesson, deep and long ;

Thou hast been a generous giver ;

I can give thee but a song.

Oft in sadness and in illness

I have watched thy current glide,

Till the beauty of its stillness

Overflowed me like a tide.

And in better hours and brighter,

When I saw thy waters gleam,

I have felt my heart beat lighter,

And leap onward with thy stream.

Not for this alone I love thee,

Nor because thy waves of blue

From celestial seas above thee

Take their own celestial hue.

Where yon shadowy woodlands hide thee,

And thy waters disappear,

Friends I love have dwelt beside thee,

And have made thy margin dear.

More than this ;—thy name reminds me
Of three friends, all true and tried ;
And that name, like magic, binds me
Closer, closer to thy side.

Friends my soul with joy remembers !
How like quivering flames they start,
When I fan the living embers
On the hearthstone of my heart !

'Tis for this, thou Silent River !
That my spirit leans to thee ;
Thou hast been a generous giver,
Take this idle song from me.

BLIND BARTIMEUS.

BLIND Bartimeus at the gates
Of Jericho in darkness waits ;
He hears the crowd ;—he hears a breath
Say, “ It is Christ of Nazareth ! ”
And calls, in tones of agony,
Ἰησοῦ, ἐλέησόν με !

The thronging multitudes increase ;
 Blind Bartimeus, hold thy peace !
 But still, above the noisy crowd,
 The beggar's cry is shrill and loud ;
 Until they say, " He calleth thee ! "
 Θάρσει, ἔγειραι, φωνεῖ σε !

Then saith the Christ, as silent stands
 The crowd, " What wilt thou at my hands ? "
 And he replies, " O give me light !
 Rabbi, restore the blind man's sight ! "
 And Jesus answers, " Ὑπαγε "
 Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε !

Ye that have eyes, yet cannot see,
 In darkness and in misery,
 Recall those mighty Voices Three,
 Ἰησοῦ, ἐλέησόν με !
 Θάρσει, ἔγειραι, ὕπαγε !
 Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε !

THE GOBLET OF LIFE.

FILLED is Life's goblet to the brim ;
 And though my eyes with tears are dim,
 I see its sparkling bubbles swim,
 And chant a melancholy hymn
 With solemn voice and slow.

No purple flowers,—no garlands green,
 Conceal the goblet's shade or sheen,
 Nor maddening draughts of Hippocrene,
 Like gleams of sunshine, flash between
 Thick leaves of mistletoe.

This goblet, wrought with curious art,
 Is filled with waters, that upstart
 When the deep fountains of the heart,
 By strong convulsions rent apart,
 Are running all to waste.

And as it mantling passes round,
 With fennel is it wreathed and crowned,
 Whose seed and foliage sun-imbrowned
 Are in its waters steeped and drowned,
 And give a bitter taste.

Above the lowly plants it towers,
The fennel, with its yellow flowers,
And in an earlier age than ours
Was gifted with the wondrous powers,
Lost vision to restore.

It gave new strength and fearless mood ;
And gladiators, fierce and rude,
Mingled it in their daily food ;
And he who battled and subdued,
A wreath of fennel wore.

Then in Life's goblet freely press
The leaves that give it bitterness,
Nor prize the coloured waters less,
For in thy darkness and distress
New light and strength they give !

And he who has not learned to know
How false its sparkling bubbles show,
How bitter are the drops of woe
With which its brim may overflow,
He has not learned to live.


The prayer of Ajax was for light ;
Through all that dark and desperate fight,
The blackness of that noonday night,
He asked but the return of sight,
 To see his foeman's face.

Let our unceasing, earnest prayer
Be, too, for light,—for strength to bear
Our portion of the weight of care,
That crushes into dumb despair
 One half the human race.

O suffering, sad humanity !
O ye afflicted ones, who lie
Steeped to the lips in misery,
Longing, and yet afraid to die,
 Patient, though sorely tried !

I pledge you in this cup of grief,
Where floats the fennel's bitter leaf !
The Battle of our Life is brief,
The alarm,—the struggle,—the relief,—
 Then sleep we side by side.

MAIDENHOOD.

 AIDEN ! with the meek brown eyes,
 In whose orbs a shadow lies,
 Like the dusk in evening skies !

Thou whose locks outshine the sun,
 Golden tresses, wreathed in one,
 As the braided streamlets run !

Standing, with reluctant feet,
 Where the brook and river meet,
 Womanhood and childhood fleet !

Gazing, with a timid glance,
 On the brooklet's swift advance,
 On the river's broad expanse !

Deep and still, that gliding stream
 Beautiful to thee must seem,
 As the river of a dream.

Then why pause with indecision,
 When bright angels in thy vision
 Beckon thee to fields Elysian ?

Seest thou shadows sailing by,
As the dove, with startled eye,
Sees the falcon's shadow fly?

Hearest thou voices on the shore,
That our ears perceive no more,
Deafened by the cataract's roar?

O, thou child of many prayers !
Life hath quicksands,—Life hath snares !
Care and age come unawares !

Like the swell of some sweet tune,
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.

Childhood is the bough, where slumbered
Birds and blossoms many-numbered ;—
Age, the bough with snows encumbered.

Gather, then, each flower that grows,
When the young heart overflows,
To enbalm that tent of snows.

Bear a lily in thy hand ;
Gates of brass cannot withstand
One touch of that magic wand.

Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,
In thy heart the dew of youth,
On thy lips the smile of truth.

O, that dew, like balm, shall steal
Into wounds, that cannot heal,
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal ;

And that smile, like sunshine, dart
Into many a sunless heart,
For a smile of God thou art.

EXCELSIOR !

THE shades of night were falling fast,
As through an Alpine village passed
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,
A banner with the strange device,
Excelsior !

His brow was sad ; his eye beneath
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue,
 Excelsior !

In happy homes he saw the light
Of household fires gleam warm and bright ;
Above, the spectral glaciers shone,
And from his lips escaped a groan,
 Excelsior !

“ Try not the Pass ! ” the old man said ;
“ Dark lowers the tempest overhead,
The roaring torrent is deep and wide ! ”
And loud that clarion voice replied,
 Excelsior !

“ O stay, ” the maiden said, “ and rest
Thy weary head upon this breast ! ”
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,
But still he answered, with a sigh,
 Excelsior !

“ Beware the pine-tree’s withered branch !
Beware the awful avalanche ! ”

This was the peasant's last Good-night.
A voice replied, far up the height,
Excelsior !

At break of day, as heavenward
The pious monks of Saint Bernard
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,
A voice cried through the startled air,
Excelsior !

A traveller, by the faithful hound,
Half buried in the snow was found,
Still grasping in his hand of ice
That banner with the strange device,
Excelsior !

There in the twilight cold and gray,
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,
And from the sky, serene and far,
A voice fell, like a falling star,
Excelsior !



POEMS ON SLAVERY.

1843.

[The following Poems, with one exception, were written at sea, in the latter part of October. I had not then heard of Dr. Channing's death. Since that event the poem addressed to him is no longer appropriate. I have decided, however, to let it remain as it was written, a feeble testimony of my admiration for a great and good man.]

TO WILLIAM E. CHANNING.

THE pages of thy book I read,
And as I closed each one,
My heart, responding, ever said,
“ Servant of God ! well done ! ”

Well done ! Thy words are great and bold
At times they seem to me,
Like Luther's, in the days of old,
Half-battles for the free.

Go on, until this land revokes
The old and chartered Lie,
The feudal curse, whose whips and yokes
Insult humanity.

A voice is ever at thy side
Speaking in tones of might,
Like the prophetic voice, that cried,
To John in Patmos, "Write !"

Write ! and tell out this bloody tale ;
Record this dire eclipse,
This Day of Wrath, this Endless Wail,
This dread Apocalypse.

THE SLAVE'S DREAM.

BESIDE the ungathered rice he lay,
His sickle in his hand ;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed ;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode ;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain-road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand ;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand !—
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's bank ;
His bridle-reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew ;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,
Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,
And the hyæna scream,
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds
Beside some hidden stream ;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty ;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of day ;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away !

THE GOOD PART

THAT SHALL NOT BE TAKEN AWAY.

SHE dwells by Great Kenhawa's side,
In valleys green and cool ;
And all her hope and all her pride
Are in the village school.

Her soul, like the transparent air
That robes the hills above,
Though not of earth, encircles there
All things with arms of love.

And thus she walks among her girls
With praise and mild rebukes ;
Subduing e'en rude village churls
By her angelic looks.

She reads to them at eventide
Of One who came to save ;
To cast the captive's chains aside,
And liberate the slave.

And oft the blessèd time foretells
When all men shall be free ;
And musical, as silver bells,
Their falling chains shall be.

And following her belovèd Lord,
In decent poverty,
She makes her life one sweet record
And deed of charity.

For she was rich, and gave up all
To break the iron bands
Of those who waited in her hall,
And laboured in her lands.

Long since, beyond the Southern sea
Their outbound sails have sped,
While she, in meek humility,
Now earns her daily bread.

It is their prayers, which never cease,
That clothe her with such grace ;
Their blessing is the light of peace
That shines upon her face.

THE SLAVE IN THE DISMAL SWAMP.

IN dark fens of the Dismal Swamp
The hunted Negro lay ;
He saw the fire of the midnight camp,
And heard at times a horse's tramp
And a bloodhound's distant bay.

Where will-o'-the-wisps and glow-worms shine
In bulrush and in brake ;
Where waving mosses shroud the pine,
And the cedar grows, and the poisonous vine
Is spotted like the snake ;

Where hardly a human foot could pass,
Or a human heart would dare,
On the quaking turf of the green morass
He crouched in the rank and tangled grass,
Like a wild beast in his lair.

A poor old slave, infirm and lame ;
 Great scars deformed his face ;
 On his forehead he bore the brand of shame,
 And the rags, that hid his mangled frame,
 Were the livery of disgrace.

All things above were bright and fair,
 All things were glad and free ;
 Lithe squirrels darted here and there,
 And wild birds filled the echoing air
 With songs of Liberty !

On him alone was the doom of pain,
 From the morning of his birth ;
 On him alone the curse of Cain
 Fell, like a flail on the garnered grain,
 And struck him to the earth !

THE SLAVE SINGING AT MIDNIGHT.

LLOUD he sang the Psalm of David !
 He, a Negro and enslavèd,
 Sang of Israel's victory,
 Sang of Zion, bright and free.

In that hour, when night is calmest,
Sang he from the Hebrew Psalmist,
In a voice so sweet and clear
That I could not choose but hear.

Songs of triumph, and ascriptions,
Such as reached the swart Egyptians,
When upon the Red Sea coast
Perished Pharaoh and his host.

And the voice of his devotion
Filled my soul with strange emotion ;
For its tones by turns were glad,
Sweetly solemn, wildly sad.

Paul and Silas, in their prison,
Sang of Christ, the Lord arisen,
And an earthquake's arm of might
Broke their dungeon-gates at night.

But, alas ! what holy angel
Brings the Slave this glad evangel ?
And what earthquake's arm of might
Breaks his dungeon-gates at night ?

THE WITNESSES.

IN Ocean's wide domains,
 Half buried in the sands,
 Like skeletons in chains,
 With shackled feet and hands.

Beyond the fall of dews,
 Deeper than plummet lies,
 Float ships with all their crews,
 No more to sink nor rise.

There the black Slave-ship swims,
 Freightèd with human forms,
 Whose fettered, fleshless limbs,
 Are not the sport of storms.

These are the bones of Slaves ;
 They gleam from the abyss ;
 They cry, from yawning waves,
 " We are the Witnesses ! "

Within Earth's wide domains
 Are markets for men's lives ;
 Their necks are galled with chains,
 Their wrists are cramped with gyves.

Dead bodies, that the kite
In deserts makes its prey ;
Murders, that with affright
Scare schoolboys from their play !

All evil thoughts and deeds ;
Anger, and lust, and pride ;
The foulest, rankest weeds,
That choke Life's groaning tide !

These are the woes of Slaves ;
They glare from the abyss ;
They cry, from unknown graves,
“ We are the Witnesses ! ”

THE QUADROON GIRL.

THE Slaver in the broad lagoon
Lay moored with idle sail ;
He waited for the rising moon,
And for the evening gale.

Under the shore his boat was tied,
And all her listless crew
Watched the gray alligator slide
Into the still bayou.

Odours of orange-flowers, and spice,
Reached them from time to time,
Like airs that breathe from Paradise
Upon a world of crime.

The Planter, under his roof of thatch,
Smoked thoughtfully and slow ;
The Slaver's thumb was on the latch,
He seemed in haste to go.

He said, " My ship at anchor rides
In yonder broad lagoon ;
I only wait the evening tides,
And the rising of the moon."

Before them, with her face upraised,
In timid attitude,
Like one half curious, half amazed,
A Quadroon maiden stood.

Her eyes were large, and full of light,
Her arms and neck were bare ;
No garment she wore save a kirtle bright,
And her own long raven hair.

And on her lips there played a smile
As holy, meek, and faint,
As lights in some cathedral aisle
The features of a saint.

“The soil is barren,—the farm is old,”
The thoughtful Planter said :
Then looked upon the Slaver’s gold,
And then upon the maid.

His heart within him was at strife
With such accursèd gains ;
For he knew whose passions gave her life,
Whose blood ran in her veins.

But the voice of nature was too weak ;
He took the glittering gold !
Then pale as death grew the maiden’s cheek,
Her hands as icy cold.

The Slaver led her from the door,
He led her by the hand,
To be his slave and paramour
In a strange and distant land !

THE WARNING.

BEWARE! The Israelite of old, who tore
 The lion in his path,—when, poor and
 blind,

He saw the blessèd light of heaven no more,
 Shorn of his noble strength and forced to grind
 In prison, and at last led forth to be
 A pander to Philistine revelry,—

Upon the pillars of the temple laid
 His desperate hands, and in its overthrow
 Destroyed himse'f, and with him those who made
 A cruel mockery of his sightless woe ;
 The poor, blind Slave, the scoff and jest of all,
 Expired, and thousands perished in the fall !

There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,
 Shorn of his strength, and bound in bonds of
 steel,
 Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand,
 And shake the pillars of this Commonweal,
 Till the vast Temple of our liberties
 A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies.

THE BELFRY OF BRUGES AND
OTHER POEMS.

1845.

CARILLON.

IN the ancient town of Bruges,
In the quaint old Flemish city,
As the evening shades descended,
Low and loud and sweetly blended,
Low at times and loud at times,
And changing like a poet's rhymes,
Rang the beautiful wild chimes
From the belfry in the market
Of the ancient town of Bruges.

Then, with deep sonorous clangour,
Calmly answering their sweet anger,
When the wrangling bells had ended,
Slowly struck the clock eleven,
And, from out the silent heaven,
Silence on the town descended.

Silence, silence everywhere,
On the earth and in the air,
Save that footsteps here and there
Of some burgher home returning,
By the street lamps faintly burning,
For a moment woke the echoes
Of the ancient town of Bruges.

But amid my broken slumbers
Still I heard those magic numbers,
As they loud proclaimed the flight
And stolen marches of the night ;
Till their chimes in sweet collision
Mingled with each wandering vision,
Mingled with the fortune-telling
Gipsy-bands of dreams and fancies,
Which amid the waste expanses
Of the silent land of trances
Have their solitary dwelling ;
All else seemed asleep in Bruges,
In the quaint old Flemish city.

And I thought how like these chimes
Are the poet's airy rhymes,
All his rhymes and roundelays,
His conceits, and songs, and ditties,

From the belfry of his brain,
Scattered downward, though in vain,
On the roofs and stones of cities !
For by night the drowsy ear
Under its curtains cannot hear,
And by day men go their ways,
Hearing the music as they pass,
But deeming it no more, alas !
Than the hollow sound of brass.

Yet perchance a sleepless wight,
Lodging at some humble inn
In the narrow lanes of life,
When the dusk and hush of night
Shut out the incessant din
Of daylight and its toil and strife,
May listen with a calm delight
To the poet's melodies,
Till he hears, or dreams he hears,
Intermingled with the song,
Thoughts that he has cherished long ;
Hears amid the chime and singing
The bells of his own village ringing,
And wakes, and finds his slumberous eyes
Wet with most delicious tears.

Thus dreamed I, as by night I lay
In Bruges, at the Fleur-de-Blé,
Listening with a wild delight
To the chimes that, through the night,
Rang their changes from the belfry
Of that quaint old Flemish city.

THE BELFRY OF BRUGES.

IN the market-place of Bruges stands the belfry
old and brown ;
Thrice consumed and thrice rebuilt, still it
watches o'er the town.

As the summer morn was breaking, on that lofty
tower I stood,
And the world threw off the darkness, like the
weeds of widowhood.

Thick with towns and hamlets studded, and with
streams and vapours gray,
Like a shield embossed with silver, round and vast
the landscape lay.

At my feet the city slumbered. From its chimneys,
here and there,
Wreaths of snow-whitesmoke, ascending, vanished,
ghost-like, into air.

Not a sound rose from the city at that early morn-
ing hour,
But I heard a heart of iron beating in the ancient
tower.

From their nests beneath the rafters sang the
swallows wild and high ;
And the world, beneath me sleeping, seemed more
distant than the sky.

Then most musical and solemn, bringing back the
olden times,
With their strange, unearthly changes, rang the
melancholy chimes,

Like the psalms from some old cloister, when the
nuns sing in the choir ;
And the great bell tolled among them, like the
chanting of a friar.

Visions of the days departed, shadowy phantoms
filled my brain ;
They who live in history only seemed to walk the
earth again !

All the Foresters of Flanders,—mighty Baldwin
Bras de Fer,
Lyderick du Bucq and Cressy, Philip, Guy de
Dampierre.

I beheld the pageants splendid, that adorned
those days of old ;
Stately dames, like queens attended, knights who
bore the Fleece of Gold ;¹

Lombard and Venetian merchants with deep-laden
argosies ;
Ministers from twenty nations ; more than royal
pomp and ease.

¹ Philippe de Bourgogne, surnamed Le Bon, espoused Isabella of Portugal, on the 10th of January, 1430; and on the same day instituted the famous order of the Fleece of Gold.

I beheld proud Maximilian, kneeling humbly on
the ground ;

I beheld the gentle Mary, hunting with her hawk
and hound ;

And her lighted bridal chamber, where a duke
slept with the queen,

And the armed guard around them, and the sword
unsheathed between.

I beheld the Flemish weavers, with Namur and
Juliers bold,

Marching homeward from the bloody battle of the
Spurs of Gold ;

Saw the fight at Minnewater, saw the White
Hoods moving west,

Saw great Artevelde victorious scale the Golden
Dragon's nest.¹

¹ The Golden Dragon, taken from the church of St. Sophia, at Constantinople, in one of the Crusades, and placed on the belfry of Bruges, was afterwards transported to Ghent, by Philip van Artevelde, and still adorns the belfry of that city.

And again the whiskered Spaniard all the land
with terror smote ;

And again the wild alarum sounded from the
tocsin's throat ;

Till the bell of Ghent responded o'er lagoon and
dyke of sand,

“I am Roland ! I am Roland ! there is victory in
the land !”¹

Then the sound of drums aroused me. The
awakened city's roar

Chased the phantoms I had summoned back into
their graves once more.

Hours had passed away like minutes ; and before
I was aware,

Lo ! the shadow of the belfry crossed the sun-
illumined square.

¹ The inscription on the alarm-bell at Ghent is “*Mynen naem is Roland ; als ik klep is er brand, and als ik luy is er victoire in het land.*” My name is Roland ; when I toll there is fire, and when I ring there is victory in the land.

A GLEAM OF SUNSHINE.

THIS is the place. Stand still, my steed,
Let me review the scene,
And summon from the shadowy Past
The forms that once have been.

The Past and Present here unite
Beneath Time's flowing tide,
Like footprints hidden by a brook,
But seen on either side.

Here runs the highway to the town ;
There the green lane descends,
Through which I walked to church with thee,
O gentlest of my friends !

The shadow of the linden-trees
Lay moving on the grass ;
Between them and the moving boughs,
A shadow, thou didst pass.

Thy dress was like the lilies,
And thy heart as pure as they :
One of God's holy messengers
Did walk with me that day.

I saw the branches of the trees
Bend down thy touch to meet,
The clover-blossoms in the grass
Rise up to kiss thy feet.

“Sleep, sleep to-day, tormenting cares,
Of earth and folly born !”
Solemnly sang the village choir
On that sweet Sabbath morn.

Through the closed blinds the golden sun
Poured in a dusty beam,
Like the celestial ladder seen
By Jacob in his dream.

And ever and anon, the wind,
Sweet-scented with the hay,
Turned o’er the hymn-book’s fluttering leaves
That on the window lay.

Long was the good man’s sermon,
Yet it seemed not so to me ;
For he spake of Ruth the beautiful,
And still I thought of thee.

Long was the prayer he uttered,
Yet it seemed not so to me ;
For in my heart I prayed with him,
And still I thought of thee.

But now, alas ! the place seems changed,
Thou art no longer here :
Part of the sunshine of the scene
With thee did disappear.

Though thoughts, deep rooted in my heart,
Like pine-trees dark and high,
Subdue the light of noon, and breathe
A low and ceaseless sigh ;

This memory brightens o'er the past,
As when the sun, concealed
Behind some cloud that near us hangs,
Shines on a distant field.

THE ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD.

THIS is the Arsenal. From floor to ceiling,
 Like a huge organ, rise the burnished
 arms ;

But from their silent pipes no anthem pealing
 Startles the village with strange alarms.

Ah ! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,
 When the death-angel touches those swift keys !
 What loud lament and dismal Miserere
 Will mingle with their awful symphonies !

I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,
 The cries of agony, the endless groan,
 Which through the ages that have gone before us,
 In long reverberations reach our own.

On helm and harness rings the Saxon hammer,
 Through Cimbric forest roars the Norseman's
 song,

And loud, amid the universal clamour,
 O'er distant deserts sounds the Tartar gong.

I hear the Florentine, who from his palace
 Wheels out his battle-bell with dreadful din,
And Aztec priests upon their teocallis
 Beat the wild war-drums made of serpent's
 skin ;

The tumult of each sacked and burning village,
 The shout that every prayer for mercy drowns ;
The soldier's revels in the midst of pillage ;
 The wail of famine in beleaguered towns ;

The bursting shell, the gateway wrenched asunder,
 The rattling musketry, the clashing blade ;
And ever and anon, in tones of thunder,
 The diapason of the cannonade.

Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,
 With such accursed instruments as these,
Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly voices,
 And jarrest the celestial harmonies ?

Were half the power, that fills the world with
 terror,
 Were half the wealth, bestowed on camps and
 courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
 There were no need for arsenals nor forts :

The warrior's name would be a name abhorred !
And every nation, that should lift again
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead
Would wear for evermore the curse of Cain !

Down the dark future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter and then
cease ;
And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,
I hear once more the voice of Christ say,
“ Peace ! ”

Peace ! and no longer from its brazen portals
The blast of War's great organ shakes the
skies !
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,
The holy melodies of love arise.

NUREMBERG.

IN the valley of the Pegnitz, where across
broad meadow-lands
Rise the blue Franconian mountains, Nurem-
berg, the ancient, stands.

Quaint old town of toil and traffic, quaint old town
of art and song,
Memories haunt thy pointed gables, like the rooks
that round them throng ;

Memories of the Middle Ages, when the emperors,
rough and bold,
Had their dwelling in thy castle, time-defying,
centuries old ;

And thy brave and thrifty burghers boasted, in
their uncouth rhyme,
That their great imperial city stretched its hand
through every clime.¹

¹ An old popular proverb of the town runs thus:—

“ *Nürnberg's Hand*
“ *Geht durch alle Land.*”
Nuremberg's hand
Goes through every land.

In the court-yard of the castle, bound with many
an iron band,
Stands the mighty linden planted by Queen Cuni-
gunde's hand ;

On the square the oriel window, where, in old
heroic days,
Sat the poet Melchior singing Kaiser Maximilian's
praise.¹

Everywhere I see around me rise the wondrous
world of Art :
Fountains wrought with richest sculpture standing
in the common mart ;

And above cathedral doorways saints and bishops
carved in stone,
By a former age commissioned as apostles to our
own.

¹ Melchior Pfinzing was one of the most celebrated German poets of the sixteenth century. The hero of his *Teuerdank* was the reigning emperor, Maximilian; and the poem was to the Germans of that day what the *Orlando Furioso* was to the Italians. Maximilian is mentioned before, in the *Belfry of Bruges*. See page 108.

In the church of sainted Sebald¹ sleeps enshrined
his holy dust,
And in bronze the Twelve Apostles guard from
age to age their trust ;

In the church of sainted Lawrence stands a pix of
sculpture rare,²
Like the foamy sheaf of fountains, rising through
the painted air.

Here, when Art was still religion, with a simple,
reverent heart,
Lived and laboured Albrecht Dürer, the Evan-
gelist of Art ;

Hence in silence and in sorrow, toiling still with
busy hand,

¹ The tomb of St. Sebald, in the church which bears his name, is one of the richest works of art in Nuremberg. It is of bronze, and was cast by Peter Vischer and his sons, who laboured upon it thirteen years. It is adorned with nearly one hundred figures, among which those of the Twelve Apostles are conspicuous for size and beauty.

² This pix, or tabernacle for the vessels of the sacrament, is by the hand of Adam Kraft. It is an exquisite piece of sculpture in white stone, and rises to the height of sixty-four feet. It stands in the choir, whose richly-painted windows cover it with varied colours.

Like an emigrant he wandered, seeking for the
Better Land.

Emigravit is the inscription on the tombstone
where he lies ;
Dead he is not, but departed,—for the artist
never dies.

Fairer seems the ancient city, and the sunshine
seems more fair,
That he once has trod its pavement, that he once
has breathed its air !

Through these streets so broad and stately, these
obscure and dismal lanes,
Walked of yore the Mastersingers, chanting rude
poetic strains.

From remote and sunless suburbs came they to
the friendly guild,
Building nests in Fame's great temple, as in spouts
the swallows build.

As the weaver plied the shuttle, wove he too the
mystic rhyme,

And the smith his iron measures hammered to the
anvil's chime ;

Thanking God, whose boundless wisdom makes
the flowers of poesy bloom
In the forge's dust and cinders, in the tissues of
the loom.

Here Hans Sachs, the cobbler-poet, laureate of the
gentle craft,
Wisest of the Twelve Wise Masters,¹ in huge
folios sang and laughed.

But his house is now an ale-house, with a nicely
sanded floor,
And a garland in the window, and his face above
the door ;

¹ The Twelve Wise Masters was the title of the original Corporation of the Mastersingers. Hans Sachs, the cobbler of Nuremberg, though not one of the original Twelve, was the most renowned of the Mastersingers, as well as the most voluminous. He flourished in the sixteenth century ; and left behind him thirty-four folio volumes of manuscript, containing two hundred and eight plays, one thousand and seven hundred comic tales, and between four and five thousand lyric poems.

Painted by some humble artist, as in Adam Pusch-
man's song,¹

As the "old man gray and dove-like, with his
great beard white and long."

And at night the swart mechanic comes to drown
his cark and care,
Quaffing ale from pewter tankards, in the master's
antique chair.

Vanished is the ancient splendour, and before my
dreamy eye
Wave these mingled shapes and figures, like a
faded tapestry.

Not thy councils, not thy Kaisers, win for thee
the world's regard ;
But thy painter, Albrecht Dürer, and Hans Sachs,
thy cobbler-bard.

* Adam Puschman, in his poem on the death of Hans
Sachs, describes him as he appeared in a vision :—

"An old man,
Gray and white, and dove-like,
Who had, in sooth, a great beard,
And read in a fair, great book,
Beautiful with golden clasps."

Thus, O Nuremberg, a wanderer from a region
far away,
As he paced thy streets and courtyards, sang in
thought his careless lay :

Gathering from the pavement's crevice, as a
floweret of the soil,
The nobility of labour—the long pedigree of toil.

THE NORMAN BARON.

“ Dans les moments de la vie où la réflexion devient plus calme et plus profonde, où l'intérêt et l'avarice parlent moins haut que la raison, dans les instants de chagrin domestique, de maladie, et de péril de mort, les nobles se repentirent de posséder des serfs, comme d'une chose peu agréable à Dieu, qui avait créé tous les hommes à son image.”—THIERRY, *Conquête de l'Angleterre*.

IN his chamber, weak and dying,
Was the Norman baron lying ;
Loud, without, the tempest thundered,
And the castle turret shook.

In this fight was Death the gainer,
Spite of vassal and retainer,
And the lands his sires had plundered,
Written in the Doomsday Book.

Doomsday Book

By his bed a monk was seated,
Who in humble voice repeated
Many a prayer and pater-noster
From the missal on his knee ;

And, amid the tempest pealing,
Sound of bells came faintly stealing,
Bells, that, from the neighbouring kloster,
Rang for the Nativity.

In the hall, the serf and vassal
Held, that night, their Christmas wassail ;
Many a carol, old and saintly,
Sang the minstrels and the waits.

And so loud these Saxon gleemen
Sang to slaves the songs of freemen,
That the storm was heard but faintly,
Knocking at the castle-gates.

Till at length the lays they chaunted
Reached the chamber terror-haunted,
Where the monk, with accents holy,
Whispered at the baron's ear.

Tears upon his eyelids glistened,
As he paused a while and listened,
And the dying baron slowly
Turned his weary head to hear.

“Wassail for the kingly stranger
Born and cradled in a manger !
King, like David, priest, like Aaron,
Christ is born to set us free !”

And the lightning showed the sainted
Figures on the casement painted,
And exclaimed the shuddering baron,
“Miserere, Domine !”

In that hour of deep contrition,
He beheld, with clearer vision,
Through all outward show and fashion,
Justice, the Avenger, rise.

All the pomp of earth had vanished,
Falsehood and deceit were banished,
Reason spake more loud than passion,
And the truth wore no disguise.

Every vassal of his banner,
Every serf born to his manor,
All those wronged and wretched creatures
By his hand were freed again.

And, as on the sacred missal
He recorded their dismissal,
Death relaxed his iron features,
And the monk replied, "Amen !"

Many centuries have been numbered
Since in death the baron slumbered
By the convent's sculptured portal,
Mingling with the common dust :

But the good deed, through the ages
Living in historic pages,
Brighter glows and gleams immortal,
Unconsumed by moth or rust.

RAIN IN SUMMER.

HOW beautiful is the rain !
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,

In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain !

How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs !
How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout !

Across the window-pane
It pours and pours ;
And swift and wide,
With a muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter roars
The rain, the welcome rain !

The sick man from his chamber
Looks at the twisted brooks ;
He can feel the cool
Breath of each little pool ;
His fevered brain
Grows calm again,
And he breathes a blessing on the rain.

From the neighbouring school
Come the boys,
With more than their wonted noise
And commotion ;
And down the wet streets
Sail their mimic fleets,
Till the treacherous pool
Engulfs them in its whirling
And turbulent ocean.

In the country, on every side,
Where far and wide,
Like a leopard's tawny and spotted hide,
Stretches the plain,
To the dry grass and the drier grain
How welcome is the rain !

In the furrowed land
The toilsome and patient oxen stand ;
Lifting the yoke-encumbered head,
With their dilated nostrils spread,
They silently inhale
The clover-scented gale,
And the vapours that arise
From the well-watered and smoking soil.
For this rest in the furrow after toil
Their large and lustrous eyes

Seem to thank the Lord,
More than man's spoken word.

Near at hand,
From under the sheltering trees,
The farmer sees
His pastures, and his fields of grain,
As they bend their tops
To the numberless beating drops
Of the incessant rain.
He counts it as no sin
That he sees therein
Only his own thrift and gain.

These, and far more than these,
The Poet sees !
He can behold
Aquarius old
Walking the fenceless fields of air ;
And from each ample fold
Of the clouds about him rolled
Scattering everywhere
The showery rain,
As the farmer scatters his grain.

He can behold
Things manifold

That have not yet been wholly told—
Have not been wholly sung nor said.
For his thought, that never stops,
Follows the water-drops
Down to the graves of the dead,
Down through chasms and gulfs profound,
To the dreary fountain-head
Of lakes and rivers underground ;
And sees them, when the rain is done,
On the bridge of colours seven
Climbing up once more to heaven,
Opposite the setting sun.

Thus the Seer,
With vision clear,
Sees forms appear and disappear,
In the perpetual round of strange
Mysterious change,
From birth to death, from death to birth,
From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth ;
Till glimpses more sublime
Of things, unseen before,
Unto his wondering eyes reveal
The Universe, as an immeasurable wheel
Turning for evermore
In the rapid and rushing river of Time.

TO A CHILD.

DEAR child ! how radiant on thy mother's
knee,
With merry-making eyes and jocund
smiles,

Thou gazest at the painted tiles,
Whose figures grace,
With many a grotesque form and face,
The ancient chimney of thy nursery !
The lady with the gay macaw,
The dancing-girl, the brave bashaw
With bearded lip and chin ;
And, leaning idly o'er his gate,
Beneath the imperial fan of state,
The Chinese mandarin.

With what a look of proud command
Thou shakest in thy little hand
The coral rattle with its silver bells,
Making a merry tune !
Thousands of years in Indian seas
That coral grew, by slow degrees,
Until some deadly and wild monsoon
Dashed it on Coromandel's sand !

Those silver bells
Reposed of yore
As shapeless ore,
Far down in the deep-sunken wells
Of darksome mines,
In some obscure and sunless place,
Beneath huge Chimborazo's base,
Or Potosí's o'erhanging pines !

And thus for thee, O little child,
Through many a danger and escape,
The tall ships passed the stormy cape ;
For thee in foreign lands remote,
Beneath the burning, tropic skies,
The Indian peasant, chasing the wild goat,
Himself as swift and wild,
In falling, clutched the frail arbut,
The fibres of whose shallow root,
Uplifted from the soil, betrayed
The silver veins beneath it laid,
The buried treasures of dead centuries.

But, lo ! thy door is left ajar !
Thou hearest footsteps from afar !
And, at the sound,
Thou turnest round

With quick and questioning eyes,
Like one who, in a foreign land,
Beholds on every hand
Some source of wonder and surprise !
And, restlessly, impatiently,
Thou strivest, strugglest, to be free.
The four walls of thy nursery
Are now like prison-walls to thee.
No more thy mother's smiles,
No more the painted tiles
Delight thee, nor the playthings on the floor,
That won thy little beating heart before ;
Thou strugglest for the open door.

Through these once solitary halls
Thy pattering footstep falls.
The sound of thy merry voice
Makes the old walls
Jubilant, and they rejoice
With the joy of thy young heart,
O'er the light of whose gladness
No shadows of sadness
From the sombre background of memory start.

Once, ah, once, within these walls,
One whom memory oft recalls,

The Father of his Country dwelt.
And yonder meadows broad and damp
The fires of the besieging camp
Encircled with a burning belt.
Up and down these echoing stairs,
Heavy with the weight of cares,
Sounded his majestic tread ;
Yes, within this very room
Sat he in those hours of gloom,
Weary both in heart and head.

But what are these grave thoughts to thee ?
Out, out ! into the open air !
Thy only dream is liberty,
Thou carest little how or where.
I see thee eager at thy play,
Now shouting to the apples on the tree,
With cheeks as round and red as they ;
And now among the yellow stalks,
Among the flowering shrubs and plants,
As restless as the bee.
Along the garden walks,
The tracks of thy small carriage-wheels I trace ;
And see at every turn how they efface
Whole villages of sand-roofed tents,
That rise like golden domes

Above the cavernous and secret homes
Of wandering and nomadic tribes of ants.
Ah, cruel little Tamerlane,
Who, with thy dreadful reign,
Dost persecute and overwhelm
These hapless Troglodytes of thy realm !

What ! tired already ! with those suppliant looks,
And voice more beautiful than a poet's books,
Or murmuring sound of water as it flows,
Thou comest back to parley with repose !
This rustic seat in the old apple-tree,
With its o'erhanging golden canopy
Of leaves illuminate with autumnal hues,
And shining with the argent light of dews,
Shall for a season be our place of rest.
Beneath us, like an oriole's pendent nest,
From which the laughing birds have taken wing,
By thee abandoned, hangs thy vacant swing.
Dream-like the waters of the rivers gleam ;
A sail less vessel drops adown the stream,
And like it, to a sea as wide and deep,
Thou driftest gently down the tides of sleep.

O child ! O new-born denizen
Of life's great city ! on thy head

The glory of the morn is shed,
Like a celestial benison !
Here at the portal thou dost stand,
And with thy little hand
Thou openest the mysterious gate
Into the future's undiscovered land.
I see its valves expand,
As at the touch of Fate !
Into those realms of love and hate,
Into that darkness blank and drear,
By some prophetic feeling taught,
I launch the bold, adventurous thought,
Freighted with hope and fear ;
As upon subterranean streams,
In caverns unexplored and dark,
Men sometimes launch a fragile bark,
Laden with flickering fire,
And watch its swift-receding beams,
Until at length they disappear,
And in the distant dark expire.

By what astrology of fear or hope
Dare I to cast thy horoscope !
Like the new moon thy life appears ;
A little strip of silver light,
And widening outward into night

The shadowy disk of future years ;
And yet upon its outer rim,
A luminous circle faint and dim,
And scarcely visible to us here,
Rounds and completes the perfect sphere ;
A prophecy and intimation,
A pale and feeble adumbration,
Of the great world of light, that lies
Behind all human destinies.
Ah ! if thy fate, with anguish fraught,
Should be to wet the dusty soil
With the hot tears and sweat of toil,—
To struggle with imperious thought,
Until the overburdened brain,
Weary with labour, faint with pain,
Like a jarred pendulum, retain
Only its motion, not its power,—
Remember, in that perilous hour,
When most afflicted and oppressed,
From labour there shall come forth rest.

And if a more auspicious fate
On thy advancing steps await,
Still let it ever be thy pride
To linger by the labourer's side ;
With words of sympathy or song

To cheer the dreary march along
Of the great army of the poor,
O'er desert sand, or dangerous moor.
Nor to thyself the task shall be
Without reward ; for thou shalt learn
The wisdom early to discern
True beauty in utility ;
As great Pythagoras of yore,
Standing beside the blacksmith's door,
And hearing the hammers, as they smote
The anvils with a different note,
Stole from the varying tones, that hung
Vibrant on every iron tongue,
The secret of the sounding wire,
And formed the seven-chorded lyre.

Enough ! I will not play the Seer ;
I will no longer strive to ope
The mystic volume, where appear
The herald Hope, forerunning Fear,
And Fear, the pursuivant of Hope.
Thy destiny remains untold ;
For, like Acestes' shaft of old,
The swift thought kindles as it flies,
And burns to ashes in the skies.

THE OCCULTATION OF ORION.¹

I SAW, as in a dream sublime,
The balance in the hand of Time.
O'er East and West its beam impended ;
And day, with all its hours of light,
Was slowly sinking out of sight,
While, opposite, the scale of night
Silently with the stars ascended.
Like the astrologers of eld,
In that bright vision I beheld
Greater and deeper mysteries.
I saw, with its celestial keys,
Its chords of air, its frets of fire,
The Samian's great Æolian lyre,
Rising through all its sevenfold bars,
From earth unto the fixèd stars.
And through the dewy atmosphere,
Not only could I see, but hear,
Its wondrous and harmonious strings,

* Astronemically speaking, this title is incorrect, as I apply to a constellation what can properly be applied to some of its stars only. But my observation is made from the hill of song, and not from that of science, and will, I trust, be found sufficiently accurate for the present purpose.

In sweet vibration, sphere by sphere,
 From Dian's circle light and near,
 Onward to vaster and wider rings,
 Where, chanting through his beard of snows,
 Majestic, mournful, Saturn goes,
 And down the sunless realms of space
 Reverberates the thunder of his bass:
 Beneath the sky's triumphal arch
 This music sounded like a march,
 And with its chorus seemed to be
 Preluding some great tragedy.
 Sirius was rising in the east ;
 And, slow ascending one by one,
 The kindling constellations shone.
 Begirt with many a blazing star,
 Stood the great giant Algebar,
 Orion, hunter of the beast !
 His sword hung gleaming by his side,
 And, on his arm, the lion's hide
 Scattered across the midnight air
 The golden radiance of its hair.

The moon was pallid, but not faint,
 And beautiful as some fair saint,
 Serenely moving on her way
 In hours of trial and dismay.

As if she feared the voice of God,
Unharm'd with naked feet she trod
Upon the hot and burning stars,
As on the glowing coals and bars
That were to prove her strength, and try
Her holiness and her purity.

Thus moving on, with silent pace,
And triumph in her sweet pale face,
She reached the station of Orion.
Aghast he stood in strange alarm !
And suddenly from his outstretched arm
Down fell the red skin of the lion
Into the river at his feet.
His mighty club no longer beat
The forehead of the bull ; but he
Reeled as of yore beside the sea,
When, blinded by CEnopion,
He sought the blacksmith at his forge,
And, climbing up the mountain-gorge,
Fixed his blank eyes upon the sun.

Then, through the silence overhead,
An angel with a trumpet said,
“ For evermore, for evermore,
The reign of violence is o’er ! ”

And like an instrument that flings
Its music on another's strings,
The trumpet of the angel cast
Upon the heavenly lyre its blast,
And on from sphere to sphere the words
Reëchoed down the burning chords,—
“For evermore, for evermore,
The reign of violence is o'er!”

THE BRIDGE.

I STOOD on the bridge at midnight,
As the clocks were striking the hour,
And the moon rose o'er the city,
Behind the dark church-tower.

I saw her bright reflection
In the waters under me,
Like a golden goblet falling
And sinking into the sea.

And far in the hazy distance
Of that lovely night in June,
The blaze of the flaming furnace
Gleamed redder than the moon.

Among the long black rafters,
The wavering shadows lay,
And the current that came from the ocean
Seemed to lift and bear them away ;

As, sweeping and eddying through them,
Rose the belated tide,
And, streaming into the moonlight,
The seaweed floated wide.

And like those waters rushing
Among the wooden piers,
A flood of thoughts came o'er me
That filled my eyes with tears.

How often, O how often,
In the days that had gone by,
I had stood on that bridge at midnight
And gazed on that wave and sky !

How often, O how often,
I had wished that the ebbing tide
Would bear me away on its bosom
O'er the ocean wild and wide !

For my heart was hot and restless,
And my life was full of care,
And the burden laid upon me
Seemed greater than I could bear.

But now it has fallen from me,
It is buried in the sea ;
And only the sorrow of others
Throws its shadow over me.

Yet whenever I cross the river
On its bridge with wooden piers,
Like the odour of brine from the ocean
Comes the thought of other years.

And I think how many thousands
Of care-encumbered men,
Each bearing his burden of sorrow,
Have crossed the bridge since then.

I see the long procession
Still passing to and fro,
The young heart hot and restless,
And the old subdued and slow !

And for ever and for ever,
As long as the river flows,
As long as the heart has passions,
As long as life has woes ;

The moon and its broken reflection
And its shadows shall appear,
As the symbol of love in heaven,
And its wavering image here.

TO THE DRIVING CLOUD.

GLOOMY and dark art thou, O chief of
the mighty Omawhaws ;
Gloomy and dark, as the driving cloud,
whose name thou hast taken.
Wrapt in thy scarlet blanket, I see thee stalk
through the city's
Narrow and populous streets, as once by the
margin of rivers
Stalked those birds unknown, that have left us
only their footprints.

What, in a few short years, will remain of thy
race but the footprints ?
How canst thou walk in these streets, who hast
trod the green turf of the prairies ?
How canst thou breathe in this, who hast breathed
the sweet air of the mountains ?
Ah ! 'tis in vain that with lordly looks of disdain
thou dost challenge
Looks of dislike in return, and question these
walls and these pavements,
Claiming the soil for thy hunting-grounds, while
down-trodden millions
Starve in the garrets of Europe, and cry from its
caverns that they, too,
Have been created heirs of the earth, and claim
its division !

Back, then, back to thy woods in the regions
west of the Wabash !
There as a monarch thou reignest. In autumn
the leaves of the maple
Pave the floors of thy palace-halls with gold, and
in summer
Pine-trees waft through its chambers the odorous
breath of their branches.

There thou art strong and great, a hero, a tamer
of horses !

There thou chasest the stately stag on the banks
of the Elk-horn,

Or, by the roar of the Running-Water, or where
the Omawhaw

Calls thee, and leaps through the wild ravine like
a brave of the Blackfeet !

Hark ! what murmurs arise from the heart of
those mountainous deserts ?

Is it the cry of the Foxes and Crows, or the
mighty Behemoth,

Who, unharmed, on his tusks once caught the
bolts of the thunder,

And now lurks in his lair to destroy the race of
the red man ?

Far more fatal to thee and thy race than the
Crows and the Foxes,

Far more fatal to thee and thy race than the
tread of Behemoth,

Lo ! the big thunder-canoe, that steadily breasts
the Missouri's

Merciless current ! and yonder, afar on the
prairies, the camp-fires

Gleam through the night ; and the cloud of dust
in the gray of the daybreak

Marks not the buffalo's track, nor the Mandan's
dexterous horse-race;
It is a caravan, whitening the desert where dwell
the Camanches!
Ha! how the breath of these Saxons and Celts,
like the blast of the east-wind,
Drifts evermore to the west the scanty smokes of
thy wigwams!

CURFEW.

I.

SOLEMNLy, mournfully,
Dealing its dole,
The Curfew Bell
Is beginning to toll.

Cover the embers,
And put out the light;
Toil comes with the morning,
And rest with the night.

Dark grow the windows,
And quenched is the fire ;
Sound fades into silence,—
All footsteps retire.

No voice in the chambers,
No sound in the hall !
Sleep and oblivion
Reign over all !

II.

The book is completed,
And closed, like the day ;
And the hand that has written it
Lays it away.

Dim grow its fancies,
Forgotten they lie ;
Like coals in the ashes,
They darken and die.

Song sinks into silence,
The story is told,
The windows are darkened,
The hearthstone is cold.


Darker and darker
The black shadows fall ;
Sleep and oblivion
Reign over all !



THE SEASIDE AND THE FIRESIDE.

1849.

DEDICATION.

S one who, walking in the twilight gloom,
Hears round about him voices as it
darkens,

And seeing not the forms from which they come,
Pauses from time to time, and turns and
hearkens ;

So walking here, in twilight, O my friends !

I hear your voices, softened by the distance,
And pause, and turn to listen, as each sends
His words of friendship, comfort, and assistance.

If any thought of mine, or sung or told,
Has ever given delight or consolation,
Ye have repaid me back a thousandfold,
By every friendly sign and salutation.

Thanks for the sympathies that ye have shown !

Thanks for each kindly word, each silent token,
That teaches me, when seeming most alone,
Friends are around us, though no word be
spoken.

Kind messages, that pass from land to land ;
Kind letters, that betray the heart's deep history,
In which we feel the pressure of a hand,—
One touch of fire,—and all the rest is mystery !

The pleasant books, that silently among
Our household treasures take familiar places,
And are to us as if a living tongue
Spake from the printed leaves or pictured faces !

Perhaps on earth I never shall behold,
With eye of sense, your outward form and
semblance ;
Therefore to me ye never will grow old,
But live for ever young in my remembrance.

Never grow old, nor change, nor pass away !
Your gentle voices will flow on for ever,
When life grows bare and tarnished with decay,
As through a leafless landscape flows a river.

Not chance of birth or place has made us friends,
Being oftentimes of different tongues and nations,
But the endeavour for the selfsame ends,
With the same hopes, and fears, and aspirations.

Therefore I hope to join your seaside walk,
Saddened, and mostly silent, with emotion ;
Not interrupting with intrusive talk
The grand, majestic symphonies of ocean.

Therefore I hope, as no unwelcome guest,
At your warm fireside, when the lamps are
lighted,
To have my place reserved among the rest,
Nor stand as one unsought and uninvited !

BY THE SEASIDE.

THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP.

“**B**UILD me straight, O worthy Master !
Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,
That shall laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle !”

The merchant's word
Delighted the Master heard ;
For his heart was in his work, and the heart
Giveth grace unto every art.
A quiet smile played round his lips,
As the eddies and dimples of the tide
Play round the bows of ships,
That steadily at anchor ride.
And with a voice that was full of glee,
He answered, “ Ere long we will launch
A vessel as goodly, and strong, and staunch,
As ever weathered a wintry sea !”

And first with nicest skill and art,
Perfect and finished in every part,
A little model the Master wrought,
Which should be to the larger plan
What the child is to the man,
Its counterpart in miniature ;
That with a hand more swift and sure
The greater labour might be brought
To answer to his inward thought.
And as he laboured, his mind ran o'er
The various ships that were built of yore,
And above them all, and strangest of all,
Towered the Great Harry, crank and tall,
Whose picture was hanging on the wall,
With bows and stern raised high in air,
And balconies hanging here and there,
And signal lanterns and flags afloat,
And eight round towers, like those that frown
From some old castle, looking down
Upon the drawbridge and the moat.
And he said with a smile, " Our ship, I wis,
Shall be of another form than this ! "

It was of another form, indeed ;
Built for freight, and yet for speed,
A beautiful and gallant craft ;

Broad in the beam, that the stress of the blast,
Pressing down upon sail and mast,
Might not the sharp bows overwhelm ;
Broad in the beam, but sloping aft
With graceful curve and slow degrees,
That she might be docile to the helm,
And that the currents of parted seas,
Closing behind, with mighty force,
Might aid and not impede her course.

In the ship-yard stood the Master,
With the model of the vessel,
That should laugh at all disaster,
And with wave and whirlwind wrestle !

Covering many a rood of ground,
Lay the timber piled around ;
Timber of chestnut, and elm, and oak,
And scattered here and there, with these,
The knarred and crooked cedar knees ;
Brought from regions far away,
From Pascagoula's sunny bay,
And the banks of the roaring Roanoke !
Ah ! what a wondrous thing it is
To note how many wheels of toil
One thought, one word, can set in motion !

There's not a ship that sails the ocean,
But every climate, every soil,
Must bring its tribute, great or small,
And help to build the wooden wall !

The sun was rising o'er the sea,
And long the level shadows lay,
As if they, too, the beams would be
Of some great, airy argosy,
Framed and launched in a single day.
That silent architect, the sun,
Had hewn and laid them every one,
Ere the work of man was yet begun.
Beside the Master, when he spoke,
A youth against an anchor leaning,
Listened, to catch his slightest meaning. .
Only the long waves, as they broke
In ripples on the pebbly beach,
Interrupted the old man's speech.

Beautiful they were, in sooth,
The old man and the fiery youth !
The old man, in whose busy brain
Many a ship that sailed the main
Was modelled o'er and o'er again ;—
The fiery youth, who was to be

The heir of his dexterity,
 The heir of his house, and his daughter's hand,
 When he had built and launched from land
 What the elder head had planned.

“ Thus,” said he, “ we will build this ship !
 Lay square the blocks upon the slip,
 And follow well this plan of mine.
 Choose the timbers with greatest care ;
 Of all that is unsound beware ;
 For only what is sound and strong
 To this vessel shall belong.
 Cedar of Maine and Georgia pine
 Here together shall combine.
 A goodly frame, and a goodly fame,
 And the UNION be her name !
 For the day that gives her to the sea
 Shall give my daughter unto thee ! ”

The Master's word
 Enraptured the young man heard ;
 And as he turned his face aside,
 With a look of joy and a thrill of pride,
 Standing before
 Her father's door,
 He saw the form of his promised bride.

The sun shone on her golden hair,
And her cheek was glowing fresh and fair,
With the breath of morn and the soft sea-air.
Like a beauteous barge was she,
Still at rest on the sandy beach,
Just beyond the billow's reach ;
But he
Was the restless, seething, stormy sea !

Ah, how skilful grows the hand
That obeyeth Love's command !
It is the heart and not the brain
That to the highest doth attain,
And he who followeth Love's behest
Far exceedeth all the rest !
Thus with the rising of the sun
Was the noble task begun,
And soon throughout the ship-yard's bounds
Were heard the intermingled sounds
Of axes and of mallets, plied
With vigorous arms on every side ;
Plied so deftly and so well,
That, ere the shadows of evening fell,
The keel of oak for a noble ship,
Scarfed and bolted, straight and strong,
Was lying ready, and stretched along

The blocks, well placed upon the slip.
Happy, thrice happy every one
Who sees his labour well begun,
And not perplexed and multiplied,
By idly waiting for time and tide !

And when the hot, long day was o'er,
The young man at the Master's door
Sat with the maiden calm and still.
And within the porch, a little more
Removed beyond the evening chill,
The father sat, and told them tales
Of wrecks in the great September gales,
Of pirates upon the Spanish Main,
And ships that never came back again,
The chance and change of a sailor's life,
Want and plenty, rest and strife,
His roving fancy, like the wind,
That nothing can stay and nothing can bind,
And the magic charm of foreign lands,
With shadows of palms, and shining sands,
Where the tumbling surf,
O'er the coral reefs of Madagascar,
Washes the feet of the swarthy Lascar,
As he lies alone and asleep on the turf.
And the trembling maiden held her breath

At the tales of that awful, pitiless sea,
With all its terror and mystery,
The dim, dark sea, so like unto death,
That divides and yet unites mankind !
And whenever the old man paused, a gleam
From the bowl of his pipe would a while illumine
The silent group in the twilight gloom,
And thoughtful faces, as in a dream ;
And for a moment one might mark
What had been hidden by the dark,
That the head of the maiden lay at rest,
Tenderly, on the young man's breast !

Day by day the vessel grew,
With timbers fashioned strong and true,
Stemson and keelson and sternson-knee,
Till, framed with perfect symmetry,
A skeleton ship rose up to view !
And around the bows and along the side
The heavy hammers and mallets plied,
Till after many a week, at length,
Wonderful for form and strength,
Sublime in its enormous bulk,
Loomed aloft the shadowy hulk !
And around it columns of smoke, upwreathing,
Rose from the boiling, bubbling, seething

Caldron, that glowed,
 And overflowed
 With the black tar, heated for the sheathing.
 And amid the clamours
 Of clattering hammers,
 He who listened heard now and then
 The song of the Master and his men :—

“ Build me straight, O worthy Master,
 Staunch and strong, a goodly vessel,
 That shall laugh at all disaster,
 And with wave and whirlwind wrestle ! ”

With oaken brace and copper band,
 Lay the rudder on the sand,
 That, like a thought, should have control
 Over the movement of the whole ;
 And near it the anchor, whose giant hand
 Would reach down and grapple with the land,
 And immovable and fast
 Hold the great ship against the bellowing blast !
 And at the bows an image stood,
 By a cunning artist carved in wood,
 With robes of white, that far behind
 Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.
 It was not shaped in a classic mould, ^

Not like a Nymph or Goddess of old,
Or Naiad rising from the water,
But modelled from the Master's daughter !
On many a dreary and misty night,
'Twill be seen by the rays of the signal light,
Speeding along through the rain and the dark,
Like a ghost in its snow-white sark,
The pilot of some phantom bark,
Guiding the vessel, in its flight,
By a path none other knows aright !
Behold, at last,
Each tall and tapering mast
Is swung into its place ;¹
Shrouds and stays
Holding it firm and fast !

¹ Vessels are sometimes, though not usually, launched fully rigged. I have availed myself of the exception, as better suited to my purposes than the general rule ; but the reader will see by the following extract of a letter from a friend in Portland, Maine, that it is neither a blunder nor a poetic licence :—

“ In this State, and also, I am told, in New York, ships are sometimes rigged upon the stocks, in order to save time, or to make a show. There was a fine large ship launched last summer at Ellsworth, fully rigged and sparred. Some years ago a ship was launched here, with her rigging, spars, sails, and cargo aboard. She sailed the next day, and—was never heard of again ! I hope this will not be the fate of your poem ! ”

Long ago
 In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,
 When upon mountain and plain
 Lay the snow,
 They fell,—those lordly pines !
 Those grand, majestic pines !
 'Mid shouts and cheers
 The jaded steers
 Panting beneath the goad,
 Dragged down the weary, winding road
 Those captive kings so straight and tall,
 To be shorn of their streaming hair,
 And, naked and bare,
 To feel the stress and the strain
 Of the wind and the reeling main,
 Whose roar
 Would remind them for evermore
 Of their native forests they should not see again.

And everywhere
 The slender, graceful spars
 Poise aloft in the air,
 And at the mast-head,
 White, blue, and red,
 A flag unrolls the stripes and stars.
 Ah ! when the wanderer, lonely, friendless,

In foreign harbours shall behold
That flag unrolled,
'Twill be as a friendly hand
Stretched out from his native land,
Filling his heart with memories sweet and endless !
All is finished ! and at length
Has come the bridal day
Of beauty and of strength.
To-day the vessel shall be launched !
With fleecy clouds the sky is blanched,
And o'er the bay,
Slowly, in his splendours dight,
The great sun rises to behold the sight.

The ocean old,
Centuries old,
Strong as youth, and as uncontrolled,
Paces restless to and fro,
Up and down the sands of gold.
His beating heart is not at rest ;
And far and wide,
With ceaseless flow,
His beard of snow
Heaves with the heaving of his breast.
He waits impatient for his bride.
There she stands,

With her foot upon the sands,
Decked with flags and streamers gay,
In honour of her marriage-day,
Her snow-white signals fluttering, blending,
Round her like a veil descending,
Ready to be
The bride of the gray old sea.

On the deck another bride
Is standing by her lover's side.
Shadows from the flags and shrouds,
Like the shadows cast by clouds,
Broken by many a sunny fleck,
Fall around them on the deck.

The prayer is said,
The service read,
The joyous bridegroom bows his head ;
And in tears the good old Master
Shakes the brown hand of his son,
Kisses his daughter's glowing cheek
In silence, for he cannot speak,
And ever faster
Down his own the tears begin to run.
The worthy pastor—

The shepherd of that wandering flock,
That has the ocean for its wold,
That has the vessel for its fold,
Leaping ever from rock to rock—
Spake, with accents mild and clear,
Words of warning, words of cheer,
But tedious to the bridegroom's ear.
He knew the chart
Of the sailor's heart,
All its pleasures and its griefs,
All its shallows and rocky reefs,
All those secret currents, that flow
With such resistless undertow,
And lift and drift, with terrible force,
The will from its moorings and its course.
Therefore he spake, and thus said he :—

“ Like unto ships far off at sea,
Outward or homeward bound, are we.
Before, behind, and all around,
Floats and swings the horizon's bound,
Seems at its distant rim to rise
And climb the crystal wall of the skies,
And then again to turn and sink,
As if we could slide from its outer brink.
Ah ! it is not the sea,

It is not the sea that sinks and shelves,
But ourselves
That rock and rise
With endless and uneasy motion,
Now touching the very skies,
Now sinking into the depths of ocean.
Ah ! if our souls but poise and swing
Like the compass in its brazen ring,
Ever level and ever true
To the toil and the task we have to do,
We shall sail securely, and safely reach
The Fortunate Isles, on whose shining beach
The sights we see, and the sounds we hear,
Will be those of joy and not of fear !”

Then the Master,
With a gesture of command,
Waved his hand ;
And at the word,
Loud and sudden there was heard,
All around them and below,
The sound of hammers, blow on blow,
Knocking away the shores and spurs.
And see ! she stirs !
She starts,—she moves,—she seems to feel
The thrill of life along her keel,

And, spurning with her foot the ground,
With one exulting, joyous bound,
She leaps into the ocean's arms !

And lo ! from the assembled crowd
There rose a shout, prolonged and loud,
That to the ocean seemed to say,—
“ Take her, O bridegroom, old and gray,
Take her to thy protecting arms,
With all her youth and all her charms ! ”

How beautiful she is ! How fair
She lies within those arms, that press
Her form within many a soft caress
Of tenderness and watchful care !
Sail forth into the sea, O ship !
Through wind and wave, right onward steer !
The moistened eye, the trembling lip,
Are not the signs of doubt or fear.

Sail forth into the sea of life,
O gentle, loving, trusting wife,
And safe from all adversity
Upon the bosom of that sea
Thy comings and thy goings be !
For gentleness and love and trust

Prevail o'er angry wave and gust ;
And in the wreck of noble lives
Something immortal still survives !

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State !
Sail on, O UNION, strong and great !
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate !
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workman wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope !
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the wave and not the rock ;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale !
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,
Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea !
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee ;
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee !

THE EVENING STAR.

JUST above yon sandy bar,
As the day grows fainter and dimmer,
Lonely and lovely, a single star
Lights the air with a dusky glimmer.

Into the ocean faint and far
Falls the trail of its golden splendour,
And the gleam of that single star
Is ever refulgent, soft, and tender.

Chrysaor, rising out of the sea,
Showed thus glorious and thus emulous,
Leaving the arms of Callirhoe,
For ever tender, soft, and tremulous.

Thus o'er the ocean faint and far
Trailed the gleam of his falchion brightly :
Is it a God, or is it a star
That, entranced, I gaze on nightly !

THE SECRET OF THE SEA.

A H ! what pleasant visions haunt me
 As I gaze upon the sea !
 All the old romantic legends,
 All my dreams come back to me.

Sails of silk and ropes of sendal,
 Such as gleam in ancient lore ;
 And the singing of the sailors,
 And the answer from the shore !

Most of all, the Spanish ballad
 Haunts me oft, and tarries long,
 Of the noble Count Arnaldos
 And the sailor's mystic song.

Like the long waves on a sea-beach,
 Where the sand as silver shines,
 With a soft, monotonous cadence,
 Flow its unrhymed lyric lines ;—

Telling how the Count Arnaldos,
 With his hawk upon his hand,
 Saw a fair and stately galley
 Steering onward to the land ;—

How he heard the ancient helmsman
Chant a song so wild and clear,
That the sailing sea-bird slowly
Poised upon the mast to hear,

Till his soul was full of longing,
And he cried, with impulse strong,—
“Helmsman ! for the love of heaven,
Teach me, too, that wondrous song !”

“Wouldst thou,”—so the helmsman answered,
“Learn the secret of the sea ?
Only those who brave its dangers
Comprehend its mystery !”

In each sail that skims the horizon,
In each landward-blowing breeze,
I behold that stately galley,
Hear those mournful melodies ;

Till my soul is full of longing
For the secret of the sea,
And the heart of the great ocean
Sends a thrilling pulse through me.

TWILIGHT.

THE twilight is sad and cloudy,
 The wind blows wild and free,
 And like the wings of sea-birds
 Flash the white caps of the sea.

But in the fisherman's cottage
 There shines a ruddier light,
 And a little face at the window
 Peers out into the night.

Close, close it is pressed to the window,
 As if those childish eyes
 Were looking into the darkness,
 To see some form arise.

And a woman's waving shadow
 Is passing to and fro,
 Now rising to the ceiling,
 Now bowing and bending low.

What tale do the roaring ocean,
 And the night-wind, bleak and wild,
 As they beat at the crazy casement,
 Tell to that little child ?

And why do the roaring ocean,
And the night-wind, wild and bleak,
As they beat at the heart of the mother,
Drive the colour from her cheek?

SIR HUMPHREY GILBERT.¹

SOUTHWARD with fleet of ice
Sailed the corsair Death;
Wild and fast blew the blast,
And the east wind was his breath.

His lordly ships of ice
Glistened in the sun;
On each side, like pennons wide,
Flashing crystal streamlets run.

¹ "When the wind abated and the vessels were near enough, the Admiral was seen constantly sitting in the stern, with a book in his hand. On the 9th of September he was seen for the last time, and was heard by the people of the *Hind* to say, 'We are as near heaven by sea as by land.' In the following night the lights of the ship suddenly disappeared. The people in the other vessel kept a good lookout for him during the remainder of the voyage. On the 22nd of September they arrived, through much tempest and peril, at Falmouth. But nothing more was seen or heard of the Admiral."—BELKNAP'S *American Biography*, i. 203.

His sails of white sea-mist
Dripped with silver rain ;
But where he passed there were cast
Leaden shadows o'er the main.

Eastward from Campobello
Sir Humphrey Gilbert sailed ;
Three days or more seaward he bore,
Then, alas ! the land-wind failed.

Alas ! the land-wind failed,
And ice-cold grew the night ;
And never more, on sea or shore,
Should Sir Humphrey see the light.

He sat upon the deck,
The Book was in his hand ;
“ Do not fear ! Heaven is as near,”
He said, “ by water as by land ! ”

In the first watch of the night,
Without a signal's sound,
Out of the sea, mysteriously,
The fleet of Death rose all around.

The moon and the evening star
Were hanging in the shrouds ;
Every mast, as it passed,
Seemed to rake the passing clouds.

They grappled with their prize,
At midnight black and cold !
As of a rock was the shock,
Heavily the ground-swell rolled.

Southward, through day and dark,
They drift in close embrace,
With mist and rain, to the Spanish main ;
Yet there seems no change of place.

Southward, for ever southward,
They drift through dark and day ;
And like a dream, in the Gulf-stream
Sinking, vanish all away.

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

THE rocky ledge runs far into the sea,
 And on its outer point, some miles away,
 The Lighthouse lifts its massive masonry,
 A pillar of fire by night, of cloud by day.

Even at this distance I can see the tides,
 Upheaving, break unheard along its base,
 A speechless wrath, that rises and subsides
 In the white lip and tremor of the face.

And as the evening darkens, lo ! how bright,
 Through the deep purple of the twilight air,
 Beams forth the sudden radiance of its light
 With strange, unearthly splendour in its glare !

Not one alone ; from each projecting cape
 And perilous reef along the ocean's verge,
 Starts into life a dim, gigantic shape,
 Holding its lantern o'er the restless surge.

Like the great giant Christopher it stands
 Upon the brink of the tempestuous wave,
 Wading far out among the rocks and sands,
 The night-o'ertaken mariner to save.

And the great ships sail outward and return,
 Bending and bowing o'er the billowy swells,
And ever joyful, as they see it burn,
 They wave their silent welcomes and farewells.

They come forth from the darkness, and their
 sails
 Gleam for a moment only in the blaze,
And eager faces, as the light unveils,
 Gaze at the tower, and vanish while they gaze.

The mariner remembers, when a child,
 On his first voyage, he saw it fade and sink ;
And when, returning from adventures wild,
 He saw it rise again o'er ocean's brink.

Steadfast, serene, immovable, the same
 Year after year, through all the silent night
Burns on for evermore that quenchless flame,
 Shines on that inextinguishable light !

It sees the ocean to its bosom clasp
 The rocks and sea-sand with the kiss of peace ;
It sees the wild winds lift it in their grasp,
 And hold it up, and shake it like a fleece.

The startled waves leap over it ; the storm
Smites it with all the scourges of the rain,
And steadily against its solid form
Press the great shoulders of the hurricane.

The sea-bird wheeling round it, with the din
Of wings and winds and solitary cries,
Blinded and maddened by the light within,
Dashes himself against the glare, and dies.

A new Prometheus, chained upon the rock,
Still grasping in his hand the fire of Jove,
It does not hear the cry, nor heed the shock,
But hails the mariner with words of love.

“Sail on !” it says, “sail on, ye stately ships !
And with your floating bridge the ocean span ;
Be mine to guard this light from all eclipse,
Be yours to bring man nearer unto man !”

THE FIRE OF DRIFTWOOD.

WE sat within the farmhouse old,
Whose windows, looking o'er the
bay,
Gave to the sea-breeze, damp and cold,
An easy entrance night and day.

Not far away we saw the port,
The strange, old-fashioned, silent town,
The lighthouse, the dismantled fort,
The wooden houses, quaint and brown.

We sat and talked until the night,
Descending, filled the little room ;
Our faces faded from the sight,
Our voices only broke the gloom.

We spake of many a vanished scene,
Of what we once had thought and said,
Of what had been, and might have been,
And who was changed, and who was dead ;

And all that fills the hearts of friends,
When first they feel, with secret pain,
Their lives thenceforth have separate ends,
And never can be one again.

The first slight swerving of the heart,
That words are powerless to express,
And leave it still unsaid in part,
Or say it in too great excess.

The very tones in which we spake
Had something strange, I could but mark ;
The leaves of memory seemed to make
A mournful rustling in the dark.

Oft died the words upon our lips,
As suddenly, from out the fire
Built of the wreck of stranded ships,
The flames would leap and then expire.

And, as their splendour flashed and failed,
We thought of wrecks upon the main,—
Of ships dismasted, that were hailed
And sent no answer back again.

The windows, rattling in their frames,
The ocean, roaring up the beach,
The gusty blast, the bickering flames,
All mingled vaguely in our speech ;

Until they made themselves a part
Of fancies floating through the brain,
The long-lost ventures of the heart,
That send no answer back again.

O flames that glowed ! O hearts that yearned !
They were indeed too much akin,
The driftwood fire without that burned,
The thoughts that burned and glowed within.



BY THE FIRESIDE.

RESIGNATION.

THERE is no flock, however watched and
tended,
But one dead lamb is there !
'There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair !

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead ;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted !

Let us be patient ! These severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapours,
Amid these earthly damps ;
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers,
May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no Death ! What seems so is transition ;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.

She is not dead,—the child of our affection,—
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air ;
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though un-
spoken,
May reach her where she lives.


Not as a child shall we again behold her ;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child ;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace ;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

And though at times impetuous with emotion
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the ocean,
That cannot be at rest,—

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay ;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way.

THE BUILDERS.

LL are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time :
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low ;
Each thing in its place is best ;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled ;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these ;
Leave no yawning gaps between ;
Think not, because no man sees,
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part ;
For the Gods see everywhere.

Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen ;
Make the house, where Gods may dwell,
Beautiful, entire, and clean.

Else our lives are incomplete,
Standing in these walls of Time,
Broken stairways, where the feet
Stumble as they seek to climb.

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base ;
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain,
And one boundless reach of sky.

SAND OF THE DESERT IN AN HOUR-
GLASS.



HANDFUL of red sand, from the hot
clime
Of Arab deserts brought,
Within this glass becomes the spy of Time,
The minister of Thought.

How many weary centuries has it been
About these deserts blown !
How many strange vicissitudes has seen,
How many histories known !

Perhaps the camels of the Ishmaelite
Trampled and passed it o'er,
When into Egypt from the patriarch's sight
His favourite son they bore.

Perhaps the feet of Moses, burnt and bare,
Crushed it beneath their tread ;
Or Pharaoh's flashing wheels into the air
Scattered it as they sped ;

Or Mary, with the Christ of Nazareth
Held close in her caress,
Whose pilgrimage of hope and love and faith
Illumed the wilderness ;

Or anchorites beneath Engaddi's palms
Pacing the Dead Sea beach,
And singing slow their old Armenian psalms
In half-articulate speech ;

Or caravans, that from Bassora's gate
With westward steps depart ;
Or Mecca's pilgrims, confident of Fate,
And resolute in heart !

These have passed over it, or may have passed !
Now in this crystal tower
Imprisoned by some curious hand at last,
It counts the passing hour.

And as I gaze, these narrow walls expand ;—
Before my dreamy eye
Stretches the desert with its shifting sand,
Its unimpeded sky.

And borne aloft by the sustaining blast,
This little golden thread
Dilates into a column high and vast,
A form of fear and dread.

And onward, and across the setting sun,
Across the boundless plain,
The column and its broader shadow run,
Till Thought pursues in vain.

The vision vanishes ! These walls again
Shut out the lurid sun,
Shut out the hot, immeasurable plain ;
The half-hour's sand is run !

THE OPEN WINDOW.

THE old house by the lindens
Stood silent in the shade,
And on the gravelled pathway
The light and shadow played.

I saw the nursery windows
Wide open to the air ;
But the faces of the children,
They were no longer there.

The large Newfoundland house-dog
Was standing by the door ;
He looked for his little playmates,
Who would return no more.

They walked not under the lindens,
They played not in the hall ;
But shadow, and silence, and sadness
Were hanging over all.

The birds sang in the branches,
With sweet, familiar tone ;
But the voices of the children
Will be heard in dreams alone !

And the boy that walked beside me,
He could not understand
Why closer in mine, ah ! closer,
I pressed his warm, soft hand !

KING WITLAF'S DRINKING-HORN.

WITLAF, a king of the Saxons,
Ere yet his last he breathed,
To the merry monks of Croyland
His drinking-horn bequeathed,—

That, whenever they sat at their revels,
And drank from the golden bowl,
They might remember the donor,
And breathe a prayer for his soul.

So sat they once at Christmas,
And bade the goblet pass ;
In their beards the red wine glistened
Like dew-drops in the grass.

They drank to the soul of Witlaf,
They drank to Christ the Lord,
And to each of the Twelve Apostles
Who had preached his holy word.

They drank to the Saints and Martyrs
Of the dismal days of yore,
And as soon as the horn was empty
They remembered one Saint more.

And the reader droned from the pulpit,
 Like the murmur of many bees,
 The legend of good St. Guthlac,
 And Saint Basil's homilies ;

Till the great bells of the convent,
 From their prison in the tower,
 Guthlac and Bartholomæus,
 Proclaimed the midnight hour.

And the Yule-log cracked in the chimney,
 And the Abbot bowed his head,
 And the flamelets flapped and flickered,
 But the Abbot was stark and dead.

Yet still in his pallid fingers
 He clutched the golden bowl,
 In which, like a pearl dissolving,
 Had sunk and dissolved his soul.

But not for this their revels
 The jovial monks forbore,
 For they cried, " Fill high the goblet !
 We must drink to one Saint more ! "

GASPAR BECERRA.

BY his evening fire the artist
Pondered o'er his secret shame ;
Baffled, weary, and disheartened,
Still he mused, and dreamed of fame.

'Twas an image of the Virgin
That had tasked his utmost skill ;
But, alas ! his fair ideal
Vanished and escaped him still.

From a distant Eastern island
Had the precious wood been brought ;
Day and night the anxious master
At his toil untiring wrought ;


Till, discouraged and desponding,
Sat he now in shadows deep,
And the day's humiliation
Found oblivion in sleep.

Then a voice cried, " Rise, O master !
From the burning brand of oak
Shape the thought that stirs within thee !"
And the startled artist woke,—

Woke, and from the smoking embers
Seized and quenched the glowing wood ;
And therefrom he carved an image,
And he saw that it was good.

O thou sculptor, painter, poet !
Take this lesson to thy heart :
That is best which lieth nearest ;
Shape from that thy work of art.

PEGASUS IN POUND.

NCE into a quiet village,
Without haste and without heed,
In the golden prime of morning,
Strayed the poet's wingèd steed.

It was Autumn, and incessant
Piped the quails from shocks and sheaves ;
And, like living coals, the apples
Burned among the withering leaves.

Loud the clamorous bell was ringing
From its belfry gaunt and grim ;
'Twas the daily call to labour,
Not a triumph meant for him.

Not the less he saw the landscape,
In its gleaming vapour veiled ;
Not the less he breathed the odours
That the dying leaves exhaled.

Thus, upon the village common,
By the schoolboys he was found ;
And the wise men, in their wisdom,
Put him straightway into pound.

Then the sombre village crier,
Ringing loud his brazen bell,
Wandered down the street proclaiming
There was an estray to sell.

And the curious country people,
Rich and poor, and young and old,
Came in haste to see this wondrous
Wingèd steed, with mane of gold.

Thus the day passed, and the evening
Fell, with vapours cold and dim ;
But it brought no food nor shelter,
Brought no straw nor stall, for him.

Patiently, and still expectant,
Looked he through the wooden bars,
Saw the moon rise o'er the landscape,
Saw the tranquil, patient stars ;

Till at length the bell at midnight
Sounded from its dark abode,
And, from out a neighbouring farmyard,
Loud the cock Alectryon crowed.

Then, with nostrils wide distended,
Breaking from his iron chain,
And unfolding far his pinions,
To those stars he soared again.

On the morrow, when the village
Woke to all its toil and care,
Lo ! the strange steed had departed,
And they knew not when nor where.

But they found, upon the greensward,
Where his struggling hoofs had trod,
Pure and bright, a fountain flowing
From the hoof-marks in the sod.

From that hour, the fount unfailing
Gladdens the whole region round,
Strengthening all who drink its waters,
While it soothes them with its sound.

TEGNER'S DRAPA.

I HEARD a voice that cried,
“Balder the Beautiful
Is dead, is dead!”

And through the misty air
Passed like the mournful cry
Of sunward-sailing cranes.

I saw the pallid corpse
Of the dead sun
Borne through the Northern sky.
Blasts from Niffelheim
Lifted the sheeted mists
Around him as he passed.

And the voice for ever cried,
“ Balder the Beautiful
Is dead, is dead ! ”
And died away
Through the dreary night,
In accents of despair.

Balder the Beautiful,
God of the summer sun,
Fairest of all the Gods !
Light from his forehead beamed,
Runes were upon his tongue,
As on the warrior's sword.

All things in earth and air
Bound were by magic spell
Never to do him harm ;
Even the plants and stones ;
All save the mistletoe,
The sacred mistletoe !

Høder, the blind old God,
Whose feet are shod with silence,
Pierced through that gentle breast
With his sharp spear, by fraud
Made of the mistletoe,
The accursed mistletoe !

They laid him in his ship,
With horse and harness,
As on a funeral pyre.
Odin placed
A ring upon his finger,
And whispered in his ear.

They launched the burning ship !
It floated far away
Over the misty sea,
Till like the sun it seemed,
Sinking beneath the waves.
Balder returned no more !

So perish the old Gods !
But out of the sea of Time
Rises a new land of song,
Fairer than the old.
Over its meadows green
Walk the young bards and sing.

Build it again,
O ye bards,
Fairer than before !
Ye fathers of the new race,
Feed upon morning dew,
Sing the new Song of Love !

The law of force is dead !
The law of love prevails !
Thor, the thunderer,
Shall rule the earth no more,
No more, with threats,
Challenge the meek Christ.

Sing no more,
O ye bards of the North,
Of Vikings and of Jarls !
Of the days of Eld
• Preserve the freedom only,
Not the deeds of blood.

THE SINGERS.

GOD sent his Singers upon earth
With songs of sadness and of mirth,
That they might touch the hearts of men,
And bring them back to heaven again.

The first, a youth, with soul of fire,
Held in his hand a golden lyre ;
Through groves he wandered, and by streams,
Playing the music of our dreams.

The second, with a bearded face,
Stood singing in the market place,
And stirred with accents deep and loud
The hearts of all the listening crowd.

A gray old man, the third and last,
Sang in cathedrals dim and vast,
While the majestic organ rolled
Contrition from its mouths of gold.

And those who heard the Singers three
Disputed which the best might be ;
For still their music seemed to start
Discordant echoes in each heart.

But the great Master said, " I see
No best in kind, but in degree ;
I gave a various gift to each,
To charm, to strengthen, and to teach.

" These are the three great chords of might,
And he whose ear is tuned aright
Will hear no discord in the three,
But the most perfect harmony."

SUSPIRIA.

TAKE them, O Death ! and bear away,
Whatever thou canst call thine own !
Thine image, stamped upon this clay,
Doth give thee that, but that alone !

Take them, O Grave ! and let them lie
Folded upon thy narrow shelves,
As garments by the soul laid by,
And precious only to ourselves !

Take them, O great Eternity !
Our little life is but a gust
That bends the branches of thy tree,
And trails its blossoms in the dust !

HYMN

FOR MY BROTHER'S ORDINATION.

CHRIST to the young man said : " Yet one
thing more :
If thou wouldst perfect be,
Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor,
And come and follow me ! "

Within this temple Christ again, unseen,
Those sacred words hath said,
And his invisible hands to-day have been
Laid on a young man's head.

And evermore beside him on his way
The unseen Christ shall move,
That he may lean upon his arm and say,
"Dost thou, dear Lord, approve?"

Beside him at the marriage feast shall be,
To make the scene more fair ;
Beside him in the dark Gethsemane
Of pain and midnight prayer.

O holy trust ! O endless sense of rest !
Like the beloved John
To lay his head upon the Saviour's breast,
And thus to journey on !



TRANSLATIONS.

THE BLIND GIRL OF CASTÈL-CUILLÈ.

FROM THE GASCON OF JASMIN.

Only the Lowland tongue of Scotland might
Rehearse this little tragedy aright :
Let me attempt it with an English quill ;
And take, O reader, for the deed the will.

JASMIN, the author of this beautiful poem, is to the South of France what Burns is to the South of Scotland,—the representative of the heart of the people,—one of those happy bards who are born with their mouths full of birds (*la bouco pleno d'aouzelous*). He has written his own biography in a poetic form, and the simple narrative of his poverty, his struggles and his triumphs, is very touching. He still lives at Agen, on the Garonne; and long may he live there to delight his native land with native songs !

Those who may feel interested in knowing something about "Jasmin, Coiffeur"—for such is his calling—will find a description of his person and mode of life in the graphic pages of *Béarn and the Pyrenees* (Vol. i. p. 369, *et seq.*), by Louisa Stewart Costello, whose charming pen has done so much to illustrate the French provinces and their literature.

I.

AT the foot of the mountain height
Where is perched Castèl-Cuillè,
When the apple, the plum, and the almond-
tree

In the plain below were growing white,
This is the song one might perceive
On a Wednesday morn of Saint Joseph's Eve :

"The roads should blossom, the roads should
bloom,

So fair a bride shall leave her home !
Should blossom and bloom with garlands gay,
So fair a bride shall pass to-day !"

This old Te Deum, rustic rights attending,
Seemed from the clouds descending ;
When lo ! a merry company
Of rosy village girls, clean as the eye,
Each one with her attendant swain,
Came to the cliff, all singing the same strain ;
Resembling there, so near unto the sky,
Rejoicing angels, that kind Heaven has sent
For their delight and our encouragement
Together blending,
And soon descending

The narrow sweep
Of the hill-side steep,
They wind aslant
Toward Saint Amant,
Through leafy alleys
Of verdurous valleys
With merry sallies
Singing their chant :

“The roads should blossom, the roads should
bloom,

So fair a bride shall leave her home !
Should blossom and bloom with garlands gay,
So fair a bride shall pass to-day !”

It is Baptiste, and his affianced maiden,
With garlands for the bridal laden !

The sky was blue ; without one cloud of gloom,
The sun of March was shining brightly,
And to the air the freshening wind gave lightly
Its breathings of perfume.

When one beholds the dusky hedges blossom,
A rustic bridal, ah ! how sweet it is !

To sounds of joyous melodies,
That touch with tenderness the trembling bosom,
A band of maidens
Gaily frolicking,

A band of youngsters
Wildly rollicking !
 Kissing,
 Caressing,
With fingers pressing,
 Till in the veriest
Madness of mirth, as they dance,
They retreat and advance,
 Trying whose laugh shall be loudest and
 merriest ;
While the bride, with roguish eyes,
Sporting with them, now escapes and cries :
 “ Those who catch me
 Married verily
 This year shall be ! ”

And all pursue with eager haste,
And all attain what they pursue,
And touch her pretty apron fresh and new,
And the linen kirtle round her waist.

Meanwhile, whence comes it that among
These youthful maidens fresh and fair,
So joyous, with such laughing air,
Baptiste stands sighing, with silent tongue ?
And yet the bride is fair and young !

Is it Saint Joseph would say to us all,
That love, o'er-hasty, precedeth a fall?

O, no ! for a maiden frail, I trow,
Never bore so lofty a brow !

What lovers !—they give not a single caress !

To see them so careless and cold to-day,

These are grand people, one would say.

What ails Baptiste ? what grief doth him oppress ?

It is, that, half way up the hill,

In yon cottage, by whose walls

Stand the cart-house and the stalls,

Dwelleth the blind orphan still,

Daughter of a veteran old ;

And you must know, one year ago,

That Margaret, the young and tender,

Was the village pride and splendour,

And Baptiste her lover bold.

Love, the deceiver, them ensnared ;

For them the altar was prepared ;

But alas ! the summer's blight,

The dread disease that none can stay,

The pestilence that walks by night,

Took the young bride's sight away.

All at the father's stern command was changed ;

Their peace was gone, but not their love estranged ;

Wearied at home, ere long the lover fled ;
Returned but three short days ago,
The golden chain they round him throw,
He is enticed, and onward led
To marry Angela, and yet
Is thinking ever of Margaret.

Then suddenly a maiden cried,
“ Anna, Thérèse, Mary, Kate !
Here comes the cripple Jane ! ” And by a
fountain’s side

A woman, bent and gray with years,
Under the mulberry-trees appears,
And all towards her run, as fleet
As had they wings upon their feet.

It is that Jane, the cripple Jane,
Is a soothsayer, wary and kind.
She telleth fortunes, and none complain.
She promises one a village swain,
Another a happy wedding-day,
And the bride a lovely boy straightway.
All comes to pass as she avers ;
She never deceives, she never errs.
But for this once the village seer
Wears a countenance severe,
And from beneath her eyebrows thin and white

Her two eyes flash like cannons bright
 Aimed at the bridegroom in waistcoat blue,
 Who, like a statue, stands in view ;
 Changing colour, as well he might,
 When the beldame, wrinkled and gray,
 Takes the young bride by the hand,
 And, with the tip of her reedy wand,
 Making the sign of the cross, doth say,—
 “Thoughtless Angela, beware !
 Lest, when thou weddest this false bride-
 groom,
 Thou diggest for thyself a tomb !”

And she was silent ; and the maidens fair
 Saw from each eye escape a swollen tear ;
 But on a little streamlet silver-clear,
 What are two drops of turbid rain ?
 Saddened a moment, the bridal train
 Resumed the dance and song again ;
 The bridegroom only was pale with fear ;
 And down green alleys
 Of verdurous valleys,
 With merry sallies,
 They sang the refrain :—

“The roads should blossom, the roads should
 bloom,

So fair a bride shall leave her home !
Should blossom and bloom with garlands gay,
So fair a bride shall pass to-day ! ”

II.

And by suffering worn and weary,
But beautiful as some fair angel yet,
Thus lamented Margaret,
In her cottage lone and dreary :—

“ He has arrived ! arrived at last !
Yet Jane has named him not these three days past ;
Arrived ! yet keeps aloof so far !
And knows that of my night he is the star !
Knows that long months I wait alone, benighted,
And count the moments since he went away !
Come ! keep the promise of that happier day,
That I may keep the faith to thee I plighted !
What joy have I without thee ?—what delight ?
Grief wastes my life, and makes it misery ;
Day for the others ever, but for me
For ever night ! for ever night !
When he is gone 'tis dark ! my soul is sad !
I suffer ! O my God ! come, make me glad.
When he is near, no thoughts of day intrude ;
Day has blue heavens, but Baptiste has blue eyes !

Within them shines for me a heaven of love,
 A heaven all happiness, like that above,
 No more of grief ! no more of lassitude !
 Earth I forget,—and heaven, and all distresses,
 When seated by my side my hand he presses ;
 But when alone, remember all !
 Where is Baptiste ? he hears not when I call !
 A branch of ivy, dying on the ground,
 I need some bough to twine around !
 In pity come ! be to my suffering kind !
 True love, they say, in grief doth more abound !
 What then—when one is blind ?

“ Who knows ? perhaps I am forsaken !
 Ah ! woe is me ! then bear me to my grave !
 O God ! what thoughts within me waken !
 Away ! he will return ! I do but rave !
 He will return ! I need not fear !
 He swore it by our Saviour dear ;
 He could not come at his own will ;
 Is weary, or perhaps is ill !
 Perhaps his heart, in this disguise,
 Prepares for me some sweet surprise !
 But some one comes ! Though blind, my heart
 can see !
 And that deceives me not !—’tis he ! ’tis he ! ”

And the door ajar is set,
And poor, confiding Margaret
Rises, with outstretched arms, but sightless eyes ;
'Tis only Paul, her brother, who thus cries :—
“ Angela the bride has passed !
I saw the wedding guests go by ;
Tell me, my sister, why were we not asked ?
For all are there but you and I ! ”

“ Angela married ! and not send
To tell her secret unto me !
O, speak ! who may the bridegroom be ? ”
“ My sister, 'tis Baptiste, thy friend ! ”

A cry the blind girl gave, but nothing said ;
A milky whiteness spreads upon her cheeks ;
An icy hand, as heavy as lead,
Descending, as her brother speaks,
Upon her heart, that has ceased to beat,
Suspends a while its life and heat.
She stands beside the boy, now sore distressed,
A wax Madonna as a peasant dressed.

At length, the bridal song again
Brings her back to her sorrow and pain.

“ Hark ! the joyous airs are ringing !
Sister, dost thou hear them singing ? ”

How merrily they laugh and jest !
 Would we were bidden with the rest !
 I would don my hose of homespun gray,
 And my doublet of linen striped and gay ;
 Perhaps they will come ; for they do not wed
 Till to-morrow at seven o'clock, it is said !”

“ I know it !” answered Margaret ;
 Whom the vision, with aspect black as jet,
 Mastered again ; and its hand of ice
 Held her heart crushed, as in a vice !

“ Paul, be not sad ! 'Tis a holiday ;
 To-morrow put on thy doublet gay !
 But leave me now for a while alone.”
 Away, with a hop and a jump, went Paul,
 And, as he whistled along the hall,
 Entered Jane, the crippled crone.

“ Holy Virgin ! what dreadful heat !
 I am faint, and weary, and out of breath !
 But thou art cold,—art chill as death ;
 My little friend ! what ails thee, sweet ?”
 “ Nothing ! I heard them singing home the bride ;
 And, as I listened to the song,
 I thought my turn would come ere long,
 Thou knowest it is at Whitsuntide.
 Thy cards forsooth can never lie,

To me such joy they prophesy,
Thy skill shall be vaunted far and wide
When they behold him at my side.
And poor Baptiste, what sayest thou?
It must seem long to him ;—methinks I see him
now !”

Jane, shuddering, her hand doth press :
“ Thy love I cannot all approve ;
We must not trust too much to happiness ;—
Go, pray to God, that thou mayst love him less !”
“ The more I pray, the more I love !
It is no sin, for God is on my side !”
It was enough ; and Jane no more replied.

Now to all hope her heart is barred and cold ;
But to deceive the beldame old
She takes a sweet, contented air ;
Speaks of foul weather or of fair,
At every word the maiden smiles !
Thus the beguiler she beguiles ;
So that, departing at the evening's close,
She says, “ She may be saved ! she nothing
knows !”

Poor Jane, the cunning sorceress !
Now that thou wouldst, thou art no prophetess !

This morning, in the fullness of thy heart,
Thou wast so, far beyond thine art !

III.

Now rings the bell, nine times reverberating,
And the white daybreak, stealing up the sky,
Sees in two cottages two maidens waiting,
How differently !

Queen of a day, by flatterers caressed,
The one puts on her cross and crown,
Decks with a huge bouquet her breast,
And flaunting, fluttering up and down,
Looks at herself, and cannot rest.

The other, blind, within her little room,
Has neither crown nor flower's perfume ;
But in their stead for something gropes apart,
That in a drawer's recess doth lie,
And, 'neath her bodice of bright scarlet dye,
Convulsive clasps it to her heart.

The one, fantastic, light as air,
 'Mid kisses ringing,
 And joyous singing,
Forgets to say her morning prayer !

The other, with cold drops upon her brow,
Joins her two hands, and kneels upon the floor,
And whispers, as her brother opes the door,
“ O God ! forgive me now ! ”

And then the orphan, young and blind,
Conducted by her brother's hand,
Towards the church, through paths unscanned,
With tranquil air, her way doth wind.
Odours of laurel, making her faint and pale,
Round her at times exhale,
And in the sky as yet no sunny ray,
But brumal vapours gray.

Near that castle, fair to see,
Crowded with sculptures old, in every part,
Marvels of nature and of art,
And proud of its name of high degree,
A little chapel, almost bare
At the base of the rock, is builded there ;
All glorious that it lifts aloof,
Above each jealous cottage roof,
Its sacred summit, swept by autumn gales,
And its blackened steeple high in air,
Round which the osprey screams and sails.

“ Paul, lay thy noisy rattle by ! ”

Thus Margaret said. “ Where are we ? we ascend ! ”

“ Yes ; seeest thou not our journey’s end ?

Hearst not the osprey from the belfry cry ?

The hideous bird, that brings ill luck, we know !

Dost thou remember when our father said,

The night we watched beside his bed,

‘ O daughter, I am weak and low ;

Take care of Paul ; I feel that I am dying ! ’

And thou, and he, and I, all fell to crying ?

Then on the roof the osprey screamed aloud ;

And here they brought our father in his shroud.

There is his grave ; there stands the cross we set ;

Why dost thou clasp me so, dear Margaret ?

Come in ! The bride will be here soon :

Thou tremblest ! O my God ! thou art going to
swoon ! ”

She could no more,—the blind girl, weak and
weary !

A voice seemed crying from that grave so dreary,

“ What wouldst thou do, my daughter ? ”—and
she started ;

And quick recoiled, aghast, faint-hearted ;

But Paul, impatient, urges evermore

Her steps towards the open door ;

And when, beneath her feet, the unhappy maid
Crushes the laurel near the house immortal,
And with her head, as Paul talks on again,
Touches the crown of filigrane
Suspended from the low-arched portal,
No more restrained, no more afraid,
She walks, as for a feast arrayed,
And in the ancient chapel's sombre night
They both are lost to sight.

At length the bell,
With booming sound,
Sends forth, resounding round,
Its hymeneal peal o'er rock and down the dell.
It is broad day, with sunshine and with rain ;
And yet the guests delay not long,
For soon arrives the bridal train,
And with it brings the village throng.

In sooth, deceit maketh no mortal gay,
For lo ! Baptiste on this triumphant day,
Mute as an idiot, sad as yester-morning,
Thinks only of the beldame's words of warning.

And Angela thinks of her cross, I wis ;
To be a bride is all ! The pretty lisper

Feels her heart swell to hear all round her
whisper,

“How beautiful ! how beautiful she is !”

But she must calm that giddy head,

For already the Mass is said ;

At the holy table stands the priest ;

The wedding ring is blessed ; Baptiste receives it ;

Ere on the finger of the bride he leaves it,

He must pronounce one word at least !

’Tis spoken ; and sudden at the groomsman’s side

“’Tis he !” a well-known voice has cried.

And while the wedding guests all hold their
breath,

Opes the confessional, and the blind girl, see !

“Baptiste,” she said, “since thou hast wished my
death,

As holy water be my blood for thee !”

And calmly in the air a knife suspended !

Doubtless her guardian angel near attended,

For anguish did its work so well,

That, ere the fatal stroke descended,

Lifeless she fell !

At eve, instead of bridal verse,

The De Profundis filled the air ;

Decked with flowers, a single hearse
To the churchyard forth they bear ;
Village girls in robes of snow
Follow, weeping as they go ;
Nowhere was a smile that day,
No, ah no ! for each one seemed to say :—

“ The road shall mourn and be veiled in gloom,
So fair a corpse shall leave its home !
Should mourn and should weep, ah, well-away !
So fair a corpse shall pass to-day ! ”

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

FROM THE NOËL BOURGUIGNON DE GUI BARÔZAI.

I HEAR along our street
Pass the minstrel throngs ;
Hark ! they play so sweet,
On their hautboys, Christmas songs !
Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire !

In December ring
Every day the chimes ;

Loud the gleemen sing
In the streets their merry rhymes.

Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire !

Shepherds at the grange,
Where the Babe was born,
Sang, with many a change,
Christmas carols until morn.

Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire !

These good people sang
Songs devout and sweet ;
While the rafters rang,
There they stood with freezing feet.

Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire !

Nuns in frigid cells
At this holy tide,
For want of something else,
Christmas songs at times have tried.

Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire !

Washerwomen old,
To the sound they beat,
Sing by rivers cold,
With uncovered heads and feet.

Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire !

Who by the fireside stands
Stamps his feet and sings ;
But he who blows his hands
Not so gay a carol brings.

Let us by the fire
Ever higher
Sing them till the night expire !



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